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LET US BE GAY

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A Comedy

BY

RACHEL CROTHERS



SAMUEL FRENCH

Thos. R. Edwards Managing Director
NEW YORK LOS ANGELES

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WITHDRAWN

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RACHEL CROTHERS
PRESENTS THIS PLAY
TO
FRANCINE LARRIMORE
AND
JOHN GOLDEN
AND
THEIR ROYAL FAITH

“LET US BE GAY” was first produced by John Golden at the Little Theatre in New York City on February 21, 1929. The play was directed by Rachel Crothers, and the cast was as follows:

KITTY BROWN.....	<i>Francine Larrimore</i>
BOB BROWN.....	<i>Warren William</i>
MRS. BOUCICAULT.....	<i>Charlotte Granville</i>
DIERDRE LESSING.....	<i>Rita Vale</i>
TOWNLEY TOWN.....	<i>Kenneth Hunter</i>
BRUCE KEEN.....	<i>Ross Alexander</i>
MADGE LIVINGSTON.....	<i>Adele Klaer</i>
WALLACE GRAINGER.....	<i>Gilbert Douglas</i>
WHITMAN.....	<i>St. Clair Bayfield</i>
STRUTHERS.....	<i>George Wright, Jr.</i>
WILLIAMS.....	<i>James C. Lane</i>
PERKINS.....	<i>Natalie Potter</i>

PROLOGUE

Kitty Brown's Bedroom. Some place in California.

ACT I

Mrs. Boucicault's place in Westchester.
Three years later.

ACT II

Scene 1—Two evenings later.
Scene 2—One hour later.

ACT III

Next morning.

PROLOGUE

PROLOGUE

Time: The present. Twelve o'clock—a night in spring.

Place: Kitty Brown's bedroom—in the Brown house—some place in California. Only a corner of the room is seen—showing the bed with canopy—and a small bed table with lighted lamp. A toilet table at Left—an arm chair below the table and in the chair a woman's small traveling case.

A door at Right opens on stage. A single chair is below the door.

The appointments are feminine and charming. The dim light falls across the bed—leaving the rest of the room in shadow.

At Curtain: The room is empty. After a moment KITTY BROWN opens the door, slowly. She controls a smothered sob—closes the door—locks it and goes slowly and lifelessly to the dressing table where she tries in a dead hopeless way to put some of the toilet things, which are on the table, into the bag.

KITTY is twenty-five—small—delicate—vivid. She wears a soft dressing robe over her night gown. As the knocking goes on she stares at the door in helpless agony—holding herself tensely.

BOB (as he knocks outside)

Kitty—open the door! Kitty—open this door! Open it! (After a slight pause.) I've read it. I've read the

damned thing. You don't mean a single word you've written on this piece of paper. Open the door.

KITTY

No!

BOB

If you don't I'll break it open.

[*He knocks violently.*]

KITTY

Go away.

BOB

Open it then.

KITTY

Go away. Everybody in the house will hear you.

BOB (*as he stops knocking and pleads*)

You didn't mean it. If you do you've got to say it to me. *Say* it to me. Don't shut me out like this, Kitty.

KITTY (*speaking with great effort*)

I never want to see you again as long as I live.

BOB

Please, dear—*please*. This isn't fair. I've got to talk to you. I've got to *see* you. Kitty, are you getting up?

KITTY

No.

BOB

You know you've got to see me. Why not do it now? Kitty, *are* you up?

KITTY

No.

BOB

Well, get up and come here and open this. If you don't—I'll—

[*He pounds on the door and rattles the knob. KITTY goes to the door—unlocks it and moves backwards quickly till she stands against the bed—staring with dread in her eyes.*]

BOB (*throwing the door open and coming in quickly—with an open letter in his hand*)

Why did you do this? Why didn't you wait and talk to me?

KITTY (*pointing to the letter*)

I've said it all there.

BOB

But you didn't mean one word of it. Kitty—dear girl—you've got to listen to me. You've got to let me tell you.

KITTY

It's *true*—isn't it?

BOB

No!

KITTY

What?

BOB

Yes—the bare facts—but—

KITTY

That's all that matters. It's *true*.

BOB

But it *isn't* all that matters. The fact is the least important thing *in* it. I'm not in *love* with her. I'm in love with *you*.

KITTY

Don't!

[BOB, *speechless a moment at her agony, stares at her.*]

BOB

Kitty—I—I'm sorry. I wish I'd told you—myself. Who did tell you?

KITTY

She did.

BOB

Not Alice?

KITTY

She said she wanted to be honest. She couldn't do anything that wasn't open and fair.

BOB

How did she—

KITTY

She says it's right—that something of you belongs to her—that she won't let anything cheat her.

[KITTY *sits on the bed quickly with a low moan.*]

BOB

It's all over and I—I'm sorry. You— Good God— don't take it like this!—*It has nothing to do with you*—nor the way I feel towards you—nor what I *am* to you. That's what you've got to *see*. That's what—

KITTY

Go away—out of the house—till I get my things together. I'm going to take the children to mother, and I'm going to get my divorce as quickly as I possibly can.

BOB

You're shaking and cold. I'm going to give you some whiskey.

KITTY

Go out of this room and don't come back.

BOB (*turning back at the door*)

I'll be damned if I will! You've got to hear *my* side of it. We've got to talk it out.

KITTY

I'm going to take the children to mother.

BOB

No you're not. Not unless I say you can.

KITTY

They're not yours. They're all *mine*. They're mine.

BOB

Don't be a fool, Kitty. The whole business doesn't mean anything more to me than getting drunk. In

fact that's just about what it is. It's over. I'm sorry. I wouldn't hurt you for anything in the world.

KITTY

You don't even know what you've done to me.

BOB

The whole bloomin' trouble is, Kitty, you don't *understand*. You still think and feel and expect just what you did when you were a girl. She's not in love with me. She's all right. She knows her way about.

KITTY

Oh—

BOB

You still don't know the actual honest to God truth about the man and woman business. If you did understand you'd forgive me. You'd say forget it old man, and let's go on.

KITTY

I've made up something that never *was* at all. I believed you were *just* exactly to me—what I was to you. I thought that *being* that way made—the children—more wonderful—made—made everything more— (*Her voice breaks.*) I know I was a fool. I thought it was the most beautiful thing in the world and it never was there at all.

BOB (*deeply moved and a little awed*)

It *was* there. It *is*.

KITTY

Oh—

BOB

Before God it is, Kitty. (*He goes to stand beside the bed.*) And just as much to me as it is to you. You're sacred to me.

KITTY

Don't come near me.

BOB

Of course I'll come near you. I love you. You're my wife.

KITTY

I'm not. I'm not. It's *never* been what I thought it was at all.

BOB

It has.

KITTY

Don't touch me!

BOB (*dropping on his knees beside the bed*)

You wouldn't stop what we are to each other? You wouldn't smash everything? You wouldn't take the children away from me?

KITTY

Get *up*—and go away.

BOB

I love you.

KITTY

You never have. You never did.

BOB

I've never stopped loving you—not for a minute.

KITTY

Then this couldn't have happened. It couldn't. It *couldn't*.

BOB

How can you be jealous of somebody I don't love?

KITTY

Jealous? Is *that* what you think? You've lied to me.

BOB

No—

KITTY

Every minute—day and night—while this was going on. Nothing's been true—*nothing*. And I thought everything about you was as true as God.

BOB

Kitty!

KITTY

If you're like this nothing in the world is what I thought it was. I can't ever believe in anything or anybody—ever—*again*.

BOB (*rising*)

It's horrible what you're doing. Killing everything, busting it all up. You're doing a great deal worse thing now than I ever did in my life. I never meant to hurt *you*—never—and you're hurting me as much as you can. You're smashing up the only thing in the

world I care a hang about and the only thing that means a damned thing anyway.

KITTY

Go away!

BOB

I belong to you, Kitty, and you belong to me.

KITTY

No!

BOB

Will you forgive me?

KITTY

No!

BOB

Can't we try again?

KITTY

No!

BOB

If I go out of this room now I'll never come back.
Do you want me to go?

KITTY

Yes.

[BOB goes—slamming the door. KITTY stares at the door—half crying out—then throws herself across the bed as the

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT ONE

ACT ONE

Time: Three years later—an afternoon in August.

Place: A sort of outdoor living room in the country house of MRS. BOUCICAULT—some place in Westchester.

The room has an air of great comfort and luxury and smartness—achieved with severe simplicity.

At Curtain: The room is empty—then PERKINS comes in from the hall at Left.

PERKINS is a neat and substantial maid of about thirty, wearing a gray uniform and small apron. Her disposition is somewhat ruffled at the moment, as she brings in a palm leaf fan—a book—a light wool rug—a black silk handbag and a small pillow—all of which she puts in and about the large chair at Right Center.

WHITMAN, MRS. BOUCICAULT'S major-domo of long standing, comes onto the terrace from the Left and into the room with an observant eye as PERKINS is placing the things. WHITMAN is gray and venerable, English and imposing—and only enduringly tolerant of other people and their shortcomings.

WHITMAN (*with great dignity and deliberation*)

It would be just as well if you did all that at the proper time.

PERKINS

I *had* all this stuff in the garden once, when she changed her mind and told me to put it *here*.

WHITMAN

Certainly, *I* told her it would be cooler here.

PERKINS

It would be just as well if you minded your own business. It's bad enough to keep up with *her* notions—hopping all over the place—without you changing her mind for her.

WHITMAN

I have been changing her mind for her for forty years—and I expect to keep on doing so, without any suggestions from you, Miss.

[WILLIAMS, *a well set up chauffeur, with a slight Irish brogue comes onto the terrace from the Right and into the room.*]

WILLIAMS

Hadley just telephoned from the station that nobody got *off* that train.

WHITMAN (*turning slowly towards WILLIAMS*)

He was *instructed* to meet the five-fifteen and wait for a train that somebody *did* get off of.

PERKINS

God knows who *will* get off—or how *many*. They may be Chinamen or monkeys this time—or the King of the Fiji Islands.

WHITMAN

Again I suggest that is none of your business, Perkins.

PERKINS

I suppose it's *yours*. I suppose you suggested the guest to her also.

WHITMAN

I have been known to do so. (*Turning again to WILLIAMS who is slightly amused but brings himself to perfect order as WHITMAN's stern eye fixes him.*) Williams, telephone Hadley, at the station, to wait until someone *peculiar and distinctive* arrives. (*WILLIAMS starts to go—but turns back as WHITMAN goes on.*) Someone *likely* to be coming here.

PERKINS

Something *queer* enough likely to be coming here.

WILLIAMS

Male or female?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*coming out from the hall at Left*)

Whitman—her name is Brown—Mrs. Courtland Brown—and I want her put at the end of the north wing.

[*At the sound of MRS. BOUCICAULT'S voice WILLIAMS has gone quickly onto the terrace and out Right. WHITMAN stands still more perfectly and PERKINS again busies herself with the articles she has placed on the small table by the chair—managing to drop one of them much to WHITMAN'S annoyance. MRS. BOUCICAULT is seventy-six—half Victorian—half ultra-modern—an enormous amount of dominating personality radiating from her hardness and her insatiable thirst for life. Her clothes have rather a*

grand manner of having been well made but not modish—and a good deal of jewelry is mixed up with chains and three kinds of glasses hung about her neck. Her hair—iron gray—is worn rather high in puffs—her voice is warm and deep and her sense of humor dry and sharp. She has one slightly stiff knee and walks with a stout stick with a curved handle. She is followed on by STRUTHERS—a good looking footman in a dark conservative uniform. She moves now in state towards her chair at Right where she sits a little heavily. STRUTHERS places the foot piece and lifts the foot of the stiff leg carefully, putting it on the stool.]

WHITMAN (*with controlled insistence as STRUTHERS moves back*)

I have a suite on the south side ready, madam.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

The *north wing* I said.

WHITMAN (*with tolerance—knowing he is right*)

Very good madam. The south side would be better.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

North. Poke that pillow in the right spot, Perkins. (*Indicating the middle of her back.*) Why would it be better? How could it be better?

WHITMAN

That suite hasn't been open at all this summer, madam.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Open it then. Open it. Why isn't it open?

WHITMAN

You gave orders to close it, madam.

[STRUTHERS *goes onto the terrace and off Right.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*knowing she is wrong*)

Rubbish! I didn't. Open it—open it.

WHITMAN (*with resignation*)

Very good, Madam.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—no—not over my feet. (*As PERKINS starts to put the rug over her feet.*) In this heat? Use your head a little, Perkins. You use yours for her, Whitman. Not that you've *got* any. Watch for the motor and bring Mrs. Brown here as soon as she comes—and get somebody *at those rooms*. Isn't that a motor now? Go on—go on. Be quick.

WHITMAN (*as he goes off at Left with great deliberation*)

I don't think so, Madam. My ears are very sharp.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

How am I, Perkins? If I didn't have to go through this confounded performance of dressing, life would be a much pleasanter business. Did you ever hear of the man who cut his throat because he got tired of the eternal shaving?

PERKINS

You look very nice indeed, Mrs. Boucicault. Very nice indeed.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What else could you say—poor thing? Here, undo

this. Oh, what a pest! Don't get old, Perkins. The longer you live the more you have to regret.

PERKINS (*untangling one pair of glasses*)

You aren't old, Mrs. Boucicault.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Don't be a fool! Thanks. Get away. Oh this heat! This damnable heat! Why *am* I here in August! Why am I fool enough to keep this place open for other people to live in! Go and see if that *is*— Hello, child—

[*As DIERDRE LESSING comes from the hall at Left. DIERDRE is a tall, dark, exotic creature of twenty—just now very startlingly beautiful in a one piece bathing suit of orange and black and a black coat.*]

DIERDRE

Oh darling—I didn't know anybody was out here. I'm going to jump in the pool before tea.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I thought you were playing golf.

DIERDRE

I did eighteen holes this morning. Bit fed up. Awfully hot.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bored—you mean?

DIERDRE

Not a bit. Do you mind if I go across this way?
[*Going onto the terrace and off at Left.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You'd better come *back* the other way. Tea will be here. Not that *I'll* mind you dripping and more *emphasized* than if you were stark naked. (*She raises her voice a trifle as DIERDRE has gone.*) Oh—

[*As BOB BROWN comes out from the hall—also in his bathing suit.*]

BOB

Oh—sorry. I didn't know anybody was out here.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I thought you were playing golf.

BOB

I did eighteen holes this morning. Rather hot.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Sounds like a well trained chorus. Have you been trying to keep cool in the house?

BOB

Trying to keep cool—yes.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Did you succeed?

BOB

Um—so-so.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bored?

BOB

Not more than usual. In fact not quite so much so. Thanks to you for taking me in.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You'd better hurry unless you want to run into a very pretty woman.

BOB

Another one?

DIERDRE (*coming back in time to hear this*)

Come on, Bob.

BOB

You *are* a perfect hostess.

DIERDRE

Don't excite yourself. You never can tell what grandmother's going to pick up in her travels.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Wait till you see her. I know something choice in women when I see it, as well as you do.

BOB (*going to DIERDRE*)

I'm sure of that—but you've let me see your granddaughter *first*. Anything after that is bound to be disappointing.

DIERDRE (*smiling at BOB*)

Keep it up.

BOB

She's more dark and glowing and mysterious than ever this afternoon.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*exasperated and helpless at their bold flirtation*)

Go jump in the pool.

BOB

But she's still more so in the water. I think I hear a motor now. Perhaps that's your pretty lady. Let's bolt.

[BOB and DIERDRE go out on terrace and off Left.]

WHITMAN (*coming on from Right of terrace.*)

Mrs. Brown is here, Madam.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*raising her voice*)

Is that you, Katharine? Come on—come on.

KITTY (*calling from off Right*)

Coming—coming!

WHITMAN

North or South, madam?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You know what I said!

WHITMAN

Very good, madam.

[*Crossing to hall entrance where he waits. STRUTHERS enters from Right on terrace and stands Left Center. He is carrying KITTY's jewel case.*]

KITTY (*coming on from the Right and stopping at Center*)

Oh, my dear! It's too wonderful to be here! And I've had the sweetest welcome. Your chauffeur looked at me very doubtfully till I asked if he was waiting for me—and then he said, "Oh, oh, I beg pardon, madam—I was looking for something much more *peculiar*." (STRUTHERS looks at WHITMAN, who in turn raises

his eyebrows and goes out followed by STRUTHERS—through the hall.) Will I do?

[PERKINS *enters from terrace, carrying a small hat box.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*putting out her hand to KITTY*)

Come here, you goose.

KITTY (*coming down to MRS. BOUCICAULT*)

What a duck you are to send for me! I want to kiss you. (MRS. BOUCICAULT *turns her cheek enduringly.*) But I won't.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'm honestly and gratefully glad to see you. You're just what I need.

KITTY

And what is that? I'm a little suspicious now.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Have you got a maid?

KITTY

A what? Oh, my word, no. No such swank. I s'pose I should have *rented* one in New York. What shall I do? Does it embarrass you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stuff! Perkins will look after you.

KITTY

Thanks so much. I'm clever and awfully neat. I shan't need much, Perkins. Take the hat out right away, please, and put it on a jigger—and here are my keys.

PERKINS (*catching the keys as KITTY tosses them*)

Thank you, Madam.

[PERKINS goes out through the hall at Left.]

KITTY

I saw it in a window—dashing through town—the *hat*—and couldn't resist it. The shops are full of the most *ravishing* August things for nothing at all—absolutely nothing *at all*—if one *has* anything at all—which I haven't. (*Pulling off her gloves she goes out onto the terrace—looking off.*) Oh, how sweet! How *sweet*! It's as peaceful as England.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

And just as dull. Are you looking for peace?

KITTY (*coming back into the room*)

I'm not looking for anything. I know better.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Blessed are they who expect nothing for they shall not be disappointed.

KITTY (*going to sit on the sofa at Left*)

Well—I made it. This *is* a hurry call, Bouci. What's it all about? I was on my way to California. Mother hasn't seen the children in three years. I wiped everything off the slate—threw some things into a trunk and *dashed* without thinking—let alone dressing. I'm feeling horribly exposed—I forgot my lip rouge.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What have you been doing since I picked you up in Paris? April—May—June—July—August—
[*Counting them off on her fingers.*]

KITTY

Different men—for different months. April was the most exasperatingly interesting man I have *ever* known—May was—mm—so-so—and *June*—Well, we'll skip June— You aren't listening anyway, you're dying to talk yourself.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'm not sorry I asked you. You look just as well as I thought you would. At least I suppose you do. Come here and untangle this pesky thing. By the time I've got them loose and on my nose I've forgotten what it was I wanted to look at.

KITTY (*having gone across to MRS. BOUCICAULT and extricated the glasses*)

You were going to look at me—I believe—but don't—if they're too penetrating. What a love!

[*Taking up a small parasol and moving away with it.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I want you to do something for me.

KITTY (*opening the parasol and twirling it*)

Yes?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

There's a man here—

KITTY (*turning quickly to MRS. BOUCICAULT*)

Ah!—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Where are the children?

KITTY

In town with the nurse till Monday.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I was afraid to tell you not to bring them for fear I'd seem rude—but thank God you didn't.

KITTY

Don't you suppose I know when to display my jewels—and when not to?

[Sitting at Center.]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

He's bored.

KITTY

Who?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

The man.

KITTY

Oh! I'll do my best—till Monday.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

How Good is your best?

KITTY

Depends on the man. One must be inspired—as well as inspiring.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

A girl is after him—hot footed.

KITTY

Is he running?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Not a step— In fact I'm afraid he's *coming on*.
That's what worries me.

KITTY

Good. Much more stimulating for me. What's he like? What shall I be like—to get him?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

He's one of those stray dogs I get interested in. I don't know much about him—except that he's been divorced—at least once, and seems to be rather *hum-ble* as men go—and to have a fair amount of money. With your alimony it wouldn't be bad at all.

KITTY (*very much amused*)

This is very touching—your interest in me. What do you want really? What's biting you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

The girl.

KITTY

Oh.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

She's one of those gorgeous young things that are running around loose now. Lives alone—is alone—father one place—mother another—knows everything—everybody—done everything—and only twenty years old.

KITTY

I know. I know. Wonderful— isn't it? They get such a good start, now. I've been *made*. They just *are*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

When are you going to marry again?

KITTY

Never.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you going to do *then*—if you don't marry—live in what we used to call—sin?

KITTY (*laughing*)

My one little talent—clothes—is beginning to make money—and when I'm paying my own bills—men may come and men may go.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Are you implying that up to this point there haven't been any—either coming—or going?

KITTY (*rising and moving away*)

Now, Boucicault, that's clumsy. I'm surprised at you.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

That's my way of being subtle. Come here, Kitty. (*Drawing a small chair out in front of her.*) Will you do this for me—take him away from the girl?

KITTY (*going to MRS. BOUCICAULT*)

I thought your religion was hands off.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

It is. But it doesn't work when it comes home. She's *my own grandchild*.

KITTY (*sitting in the chair before* MRS. BOUCICAULT)

Oh, I see.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I've got to keep her from going to the dogs before the first of October.

KITTY

Why the first of October?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

She's going to marry a nice boy the first of October—an awfully nice boy. He's here too. They've got everything in the world in common to make a go of it—when—bing—out of the blue she takes this shameless damnable passion for this man.

KITTY

You don't think you can do anything about *that*—do you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

That's why I sent for you.

KITTY

You never seemed like an old woman to me before, Bouci—not a bit. Always as fresh and open minded about life as—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Shut up. I'm not talking about life, I'm talking about my own granddaughter.

KITTY

Oh, well then, of course you can't be expected to use your common sense at all.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

She's in a kind of danger I don't want to recognize—but I'm frightened, Kitty. I want to beat her over the head and make her behave, but I'm pretending I don't see anything. Now the best thing that could possibly happen is for you to take the man.

KITTY

I'm tremendously flattered that you think I could get a man away from a stunning young thing like that—but even if I *could*, don't you know the sooner she finds out everything for *herself*—the sooner she loses her romantic illusions—the happier and safer she's going to be?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'm not so sure. Women are getting everything they think they want now, but are they any happier than when they used to stay at home—with their romantic illusions—and let men fool them?

KITTY

At least they're more intelligent. That's one thing I refuse to be—a happy fool.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Un! I'd like to live another fifty years—without the bother of living—to see this thing through. I've watched a long procession of men, women and morals through three generations. I'm seventy-six, and I don't know anything.

KITTY

That's why you're so wise, dearest.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I always knew my husband wasn't faithful to me, but I lived in hell with him for fifty years because divorce wasn't respectable. My only daughter had three divorces—which I was tickled to death to see her get—and here's my grandchild in the middle of this modern moral revolution and I'm helpless—can't do a thing for her. She's grown up before I knew it—dumped herself in my lap and this thing has happened right under my nose.

KITTY

Then for Heaven's sake, let it *happen*. Let it alone.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—by God—I won't. She's got to walk up that aisle a perfectly decent girl if I have to lock her up till—

KITTY

Now see here, Bouci. I don't think I'm clever enough for this job if it's as important as all that.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You can do it if you *want* to. Didn't I see you take the Russian away from the Italian princess before she even *knew* it?

KITTY

I didn't take him away. I just borrowed him for the week-end. Who else is here besides your piece de resistance?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I can't remember. I never see anyone till tea. From

then on to midnight is as much as I can stand of any guest.

KITTY

You don't care what they do after midnight—just so they let you alone.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Not a bit. They'll be coming in in sections now. Oh—here's Townley. (*As TOWNLEY TOWN strolls in dragging his golf bag. TOWNLEY is forty—tall, plain and charming—not very vivid—not very weak—indestructible in his inscrutable agreeableness. His golf clothes are well worn and his bag is shabby.*) Townley, this is Mrs. Courtland Brown. She's not quite as sweet as she looks, but you'll think she is. Go and impress her.

TOWNLEY (*going down to KITTY*)

I'm nicer than I look—much.

KITTY (*giving her left hand to him*)

How could you be! How do you do. Oh you magnificent long legged Britishers! I've been avoiding you in Paris—but you *are* wonderful—aren't you?

TOWNLEY

Yes—we are—aren't we?

KITTY (*to MRS. BOUCICAULT as TOWNLEY goes to Left to put down his golf bag*)

I thought you said he was humble.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

This isn't the one.

KITTY

Oh—I'm sorry! I'll have to say it all over again—
for that's the way I'm going to begin.

TOWNLEY

Begin what?

[*Turning back to KITTY.*]

KITTY (*moving towards TOWNLEY*)

Bouci has a subtly laid plan for me to get a man.
Would that get *you*?

TOWNLEY

I don't remember what you said—but you *have* got
me.

KITTY (*stopping at the sofa at Left*)

Oh I like this one. Make it this one.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Practice on him.

TOWNLEY

She doesn't seem to need practice.

KITTY

Let's begin at the beginning. Who are you?

TOWNLEY (*putting his hands on the back of the sofa
and leaning towards KITTY*)

Well—I'm a professional visitor. I get an S.O.S.
from Bouci—"Man shy"—and I come. I have a suit
case—sport clothes—dinner clothes and a suit to
arrive in. I take on any woman in any way desired
—and I use my knife and fork in the continental
manner.

KITTY

And way down deep in under you're a v'ery sweet person.

TOWNLEY

You've found me out. Do you mind if I stay hot and wet for tea here at your feet? I'm afraid if I go somebody else will come and—

[*Sitting beside KITTY on the sofa.*]

KITTY

Don't leave me. You make me so comfortable.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Here's another one. (*As BRUCE KEEN comes in—also in golf clothes and a bag—without a hat. He is young tall and good looking in a fresh straightforward way.*) Are you wet too?

BRUCE

Not a bit. I changed at the Club. Why? Do I look messy?

TOWNLEY (*to KITTY*)

So did I change. I only said that to show you I was even willing to catch cold for you. I'm just as dry and sweet scented as he is. So don't push me off on that account.

KITTY

I'm hanging on to you. Who's that?

[*Smiling at BRUCE, who has disposed of his golf bag and gone to stand beside MRS. BOUCICAULT.*]

TOWNLEY

Nobody you'll care about.

BRUCE (*to KITTY*)

Yes I am.

KITTY (*puffing her cigarette which TOWNLEY is lighting*)

I'm sure you are. I can tell that at long distance.

BRUCE (*to MRS. BOUCICAULT*)

Where's Dierdre?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*evading his question*)

That's Mrs. Courtland Brown. Go and tell her who you are and get it over.

TOWNLEY (*as BRUCE comes to them*)

I'll save you that embarrassment. This is Bruce Keen—young—handsome and very much in demand both with the upper bums and the best people. But by Monday morning you'll find *me* very much more satisfactory.

BRUCE

Do you think that's clever?

KITTY (*giving BRUCE her hand*)

I didn't hear him. I was looking at you. How magnificent you long legged Americans are! I've been avoiding you in Paris—but you—

[TOWNLEY *and* MRS. BOUCICAULT *laugh.*]

BRUCE

What's so funny about that?

TOWNLEY

It's deep. You have to be on the inside to get it.

KITTY

Oh, I'm having such a good time!

TOWNLEY (*getting up*)

You'll have a better one now. Here's tea. And *such* tea!

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Katherine, if you want to wash your hands and feet before you have it, somebody will take you in.

KITTY

I wouldn't leave for anything. Do you want me to pour it?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I certainly do not. Go and get your own, and if you don't get what you want, it's your own fault. Give me mine first, Whitman. That's all I care about *and who is rattling back there?*

[*As STRUTHERS, the footman, rattles a cup and saucer.*]

WHITMAN (*frowning and shaking his head at STRUTHERS*)

Beg pardon, Madam.

[WHITMAN *takes tea and cakes to MRS. BOUCICAULT, placing them on the table beside her—and going back onto the terrace.*]

KITTY (*rising as BRUCE picks up the little parasol which she has left on the sofa*)

Are you going to hold that over me while I drink tea? It might add a flattering glow.

BRUCE

You don't need any extra glow.

KITTY (*to TOWNLEY as BRUCE goes onto the terrace with the parasol*)

It's not as young as it looks.

[STRUTHERS *has gone off Left on the terrace and returned with a tray of Scotch—White Rock, ice—etc.*]

TOWNLEY (*as he and KITTY move towards the tea table*)

Come and look before its equilibrium gets disturbed.
It's like a glorified automat.

KITTY

I haven't had any luncheon but a Grand Central sandwich—which is still right here.

[*Putting a finger on her chest.*]

TOWNLEY

What will you have? Hearts or crescents?

KITTY

Both. Don't ask me to eliminate anything. What are those over there, the dressy little green ones?

BRUCE

Try one and find out. (*Coming down to MRS. BOUCICAULT with his own highball and sandwich.*) Have you got everything?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Of course. Let me alone now.

BRUCE

Is Brown with Dierdre?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*drinking her tea*)

How do I know?

BRUCE

He is then.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*nodding towards KITTY*)

She'll get him away from her. Don't you think she could?

BRUCE (*looking at KITTY as she and TOWNLEY talk on the terrace*)

Who is she really?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't know. I picked her up in Paris because I like her. What do you think?

BRUCE

She's got a very come hither look in her eye.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Think so?

BRUCE

You know she has, you wise old devil.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't know anything about anybody. Go way. (*MADGE LIVINGSTON comes out from the hall.*) Oh—come out, Madge. How delightful you are! It cools me off just to look at you.

BRUCE

Marvelous—Mrs. Livingston.

[MRS. LIVINGSTON *is possibly thirty-eight—looking younger—tall and frail and beautiful in a pale patrician way. She is now wearing something diaphanous and trailing, which adds to her illusiveness. She moves with a slow grace and slight hauteur.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I must say it pleases me to see a guest looking as if she'd spent the whole day dressing for me to look at her—instead of running around day and night in a one piece something.

BRUCE

What are you having?

MADGE

I'm not having anything. No, nothing, thank you, dear. (*As BRUCE comes towards her.*) Oh—will you be sweet enough to move this for me—just a little nearer?

[*Indicating the sofa.*]

BRUCE

All right?

[*Having gone back of the sofa and moving it about one inch nearer to MADGE.*]

MADGE

Just, thanks. (*As she sits languidly.*) Oh there is a little breeze out here. I thought it was too hot to come out. Wallace has been reading aloud to me.

[BRUCE *goes to KITTY and TOWNLEY on the terrace.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't know any greater proof—(*putting her tea down and throwing her napkin after it.*) Take this, Whitman. Take it away. I can't stand anything after I'm through with it. (*WHITMAN comes from the terrace and takes the tea away.*) I don't know any greater proof of a man's slavish devotion to a woman than reading aloud to her in August. I s'pose you've made him think his voice is beautiful.

MADGE

Not so beautiful as his *mind*. Have you read his latest book?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I read *everything*.

MADGE

Isn't it the exquisite revelation of an exquisite spirit?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

It seems to me to be the tired effort of a *very* tired man. A burned out one.

MADGE

You refuse to see him as he is.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You refuse to see him as he is because you've helped to burn him out.

MADGE

How detestable you can be, Boucicault. I thought you *understood* my *tragedy*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't see much tragedy in a perfectly good husband with a bank-roll—on one side of the fence—and a perfectly good *beau*—on the other.

MADGE

I've sacrificed my life to Wallace and his work. I've been his inspiration. He *has* written great books.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Well—at least he's been devoted to one woman for ten years. That's a much more unusual thing for a man to do than to write a great book. Let's give him credit for that.

[WALLACE GRAINGER *appears in the hall entrance. He is about forty. A man with a great deal of manner—the perfection of which seems trying to make up for lost enthusiasms. He is wearing flannels and is in most perfect style. He carries a paper novel and paper knife.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Come out, Wallace.

MADGE

It *is* cooler out here, dear, after all.

WALLACE (*stopping in front of MADGE*)

I finished it. It has a nice attitude at the end.

MADGE

Oh, really? What?

WALLACE

I won't tell you. I want you to enjoy it yourself.

MADGE

But dearest, I'll only enjoy it with you.

WALLACE (*going to* MRS. BOUCICAULT)

Try this, Mrs. Boucicault. You'll find it very amusing and the most delightful French I've read in a very long time.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

There are only two kinds of French for me—the kind I do understand and the kind I don't.

[*Taking the book.*]

WALLACE

Aren't you having any tea, Madge?

MADGE

No—but I will let you bring me a glass of water—no ice. Oh, there's my handkerchief. Please. Thanks. (*As WALLACE picks up the handkerchief.*) And dearest—will you be an angel and bring me my scarf? I left it on a chair by the door, just inside, I think. (*WALLACE goes back into the house.*) Is that somebody new out there? Boucicault—(*As MRS. BOUCICAULT having opened the book, doesn't hear her.*) Is that somebody new out there? When did she come? Rather effective, isn't she?
[*Looking at KITTY, whose voice is heard as she chats gaily with the men on the terrace.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Kitty Brown. Mrs. Courtland Brown.

MADGE

Another Brown? You seem to be going in for Browns.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

This is the California variety. Come here, Kitty.

MADGE

She doesn't hear you. She seems to be rather absorbed in the men. (*WALLACE comes back with a filmy scarf which he throws over MADGE—standing back of her.*) Thanks so much.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Tell Mrs. Brown I want her.

[*WALLACE goes to the tea table where TOWNLEY introduces him to KITTY.*]

MADGE

Isn't it a trifle unfortunate that Dierdre has gone in for Browns too—so near her wedding day?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stuff! Nonsense! What do you mean?

MADGE (*absorbed in draping her scarf about her shoulders as effectively as possible*)

Would you like me to be perfectly frank, dear?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I certainly would not. Go on—what is it? Say it. Say it.

MADGE

I thought when I saw them together last night the sooner you got rid of him the—

[*BOB comes out through the hall entrance. He has changed to afternoon flannels.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

It's just as well you came along before we said it.

MADGE

I was going to say something very charming about you, Mr. Brown.

[*She smiles and purrs at BOB, who goes to stand back of the sofa.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

She was asking me to let her be perfectly frank.

BOB

That's always ominous. What a lovely frock, Mrs. Livingston.

MADGE

Oh, do you like it? I'm glad.

BOB

At least you make it seem lovely. I think a woman is well dressed when we can't tell where her own charm stops and her clothes begin.

MADGE

You're so *understanding*. Oh, (*As BOB starts towards the terrace.*) I wonder if you'd be sweet enough to give me one of those cushions?

BOB (*taking two pillows from the large chair back of him*)

Which one will you have? Green or blue?

MADGE

A green one, I think.

[KITTY is out of sight—having gone to the Left on the terrace with the men. As BOB lifts the pillows KITTY's laugh suddenly rings out. BOB, hearing it—stops—and stands rigidly waiting—holding the two pillows.]

MADGE (*turning to see why BOB hasn't given her the cushion*)

Green—that's blue.

BOB

Oh.

[*He mechanically gives a pillow to MADGE. KITTY comes across the terrace followed by TOWNLEY, BRUCE and WALLACE. Laughing, she goes to MRS. BOUCICAULT—stopping above her chair.*]

TOWNLEY

Tell that last one to Mrs. Boucicault, Mrs. Brown. She'll love it.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You two Browns must know each other. Mr. Bob Brown—this is Mrs. Courtland Brown. (*There is a slight pause. MRS. BOUCICAULT turns to look at KITTY.*) What's the matter?

KITTY (*after a deep breath—looking at BOB*)

How wonderful you long legged Americans are! I've been avoiding you in Paris—but it is wonderful to see you again.

BOB (*in level tones, looking steadily at KITTY*)

Do you mean that?

TOWNLEY

Don't flatter yourself too much, Brown. She thinks we *all* have long legs.

KITTY

Has anybody got a cigarette? (*The three men near her offer her one.*) Oh, not three. That's my unlucky number. The third of June was my wedding day, today is the third of August, and three years ago—thanks.

[*Taking a cigarette from one, and a light from another.*]

BOB (*not taking his eyes away from KITTY*)

What were you going to say—Mrs. Brown? Did anything unlucky happen to you three years ago?

KITTY (*as WALLACE lights her cigarette*)

I thought so then. I've grown wiser since. Have you ever been in California, Mr. Brown? I keep thinking I've seen you *some* place.

[*Moving a little towards BOB.*]

BOB

Yes—I have—but I don't seem to remember the *Courtland* Browns.

KITTY

Courtland was my maiden name. I took it back after my divorce of course, and I'm crazy about it. Mrs. Courtland Brown. Not bad, eh?

TOWNLEY

No—if one *must* be a Brown—Courtland certainly helps.

KITTY

That's the way I feel about it. Perhaps you don't mind being Brown. I did horribly.

BOB

You seem to have got rid of it pretty successfully.

KITTY

Where's that nice girl you were telling me about, Boucicault?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Where is she, Bob?

BOB

I left her in the pool. She wouldn't come out.

MADGE (*still on the sofa*)

I'm Madge Livingston, Mrs. Brown. Nobody seems to be introducing us.

KITTY (*going to MADGE with gracious charm and putting out her hand*)

Oh, how do you do.

MADGE

I've been admiring you.

KITTY

How nice! I'm grateful.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Go get your tea, Bob. (BOB *staring at KITTY, doesn't hear.*) Don't stand around looking indefinite, Bob! Tea!

BOB

What? Oh—yes—thanks. I'll have about the longest drink of Scotch I've ever had in my life—I think.

[He goes out to the tea table.]

KITTY (*watching him as he goes*)

There's something strangely familiar about that man.

TOWNLEY

I dare say all Browns have something in common.

DIERDRE (*coming from the house fresh and handsome in sport clothes—seeing KITTY and going to her*)

I'm awfully glad you got here. Gran's keen about you. Get me some food, will you, Bruce?

[BRUCE goes to the tea table.]

KITTY

If I were a man I should fall in love with her *at once*.

[KITTY says this at BOB as he comes back with his drink and goes down Left. She sits on the small chair near MRS. BOUCICAULT at Right Center.]

TOWNLEY

That's what we all do.

[TOWNLEY is leaning lazily against the piano.]

DIERDRE

I haven't noticed any special ardor on your part.

TOWNLEY

If I seem cold it's because I'm deep.

MADGE

But the one she's going to marry is so beautifully in love with her.

KITTY

Which one is that? Mr. Brown?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stop your monkey tricks, Kitty. (*Hitting KITTY's chair with her stick quickly.*) I told you it was this boy—this nice boy Bruce.

DIERDRE

Thanks, darling. (*As BRUCE comes back to her with a sandwich and a highball.*) Are you a nice boy?

BRUCE

I think I am.

MADGE

Aren't they a beautiful pair? (*BRUCE and DIERDRE standing together, take a foolish pose.*) I hope you're going to be married in this dear quaint little church out here, Dierdre, instead of in town. The lines are so good. Aren't they, Wallace?

WALLACE (*coming to sit in the chair at Center*)

The lines? Yes—very good indeed.

KITTY

Well, at least that's *something*. Good lines in a church are a much better reason than most people have for getting married.

MADGE

Aren't you going to do that, Dierdre?

TOWNLEY

We could work up something very nice. The wedding procession walking over the grass—with garlands in our hands. What? Tum—tum—te—tum—tum—tum.

[*Singing the wedding march and moving about a little.*]

BRUCE

Personally I'd rather be married by a policeman on the corner—no fuss.

[*Leaning on one of the pillars under the balcony.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

How do you like Madge's idea, Dierdre—the wedding here? You can have the whole place for the autumn if you want it.

DIERDRE (*a little absently, drinking her highball as she stands back of the sofa at Left*)

Thanks.

TOWNLEY

Your enthusiasm thrills me.

MADGE

Nothing could be more romantic. The leaves will be turning and the vines on the stone wall will be—Mrs. Brown, did you notice it as you drove in?

KITTY

Oh, yes, I think I did. I was married in a little church too— But it was spring— Everything was just beginning—instead of dying. It was the most perfect June that ever was—of course.

BOB

You must have been a perfect bride, Mrs. Brown.

KITTY

I was. I believed it all. The holy sacrament and everything. There never was such sunshine as it fell across the altar. There never were such flowers—and such bridesmaids. They wore large soft hats and green tulle frocks. Darlings—every one of them. They all have their divorces now.

[*The others laugh a little with the exception of BOB and MADGE.*]

BOB (*keeping his eyes steadily on KITTY*)

I hope the bridegroom was fairly satisfactory *at the time*.

KITTY

He was the most perfect part of it. And I was more in love than any girl—any place—*ever* was. Wasn't your wedding like that, Mrs. Livingston?

MADGE (*shocked—and with excessive dignity*)

A wedding is a very beautiful thing—always.

KITTY

Are you still sentimental about your wedding—Mr. Livingston?

WALLACE (*embarrassed, when he realizes KITTY is speaking to him*)

I've never had a wedding and my name is Grainger.
[*He rises and goes out onto the terrace.*]

KITTY

Oh—how stupid I am. Sorry.

[*There is a swift exchange of amused glances between DIERDRE, BRUCE and TOWNLEY.*]

KITTY (*to DIERDRE and BRUCE, as DIERDRE sits in the chair which WALLACE left—and BRUCE stands near her*)

You both look so clever. Why don't you do something entirely new? Why go on doing the same old things you know won't work?

TOWNLEY

Yes, why not evolve something called marriage which the human animal could have some reasonable hope of making a success of?

BOB

For instance? What do you suggest, Mrs. Brown? What new arrangement do you think might make marriage a success? Have you evolved a solution? You seem so cheerful about it you must have thought of something pretty good.

KITTY (*still sitting at Right Center*)

I haven't got far—but some graceful arrangement with all the little annoying things like love and fidelity entirely left out. It's absolutely fatal to marry the ones we're in love with. Don't you think so, Mrs. Livingston?

MADGE

My marriage was a success—a great success—and

I can't bear this flippant cynical talk about the most sacred thing in the world. You haven't given me the glass of water, Wallace.

WALLACE

Oh, I'm so sorry.

[Going to tea table to get it.]

KITTY (*rising*)

I'd love to walk about and see the place.

TOWNLEY

May I come with you and point out the best features?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No, you may *not*. I need you, Townley. I'm going to walk a little myself and you're the only one lazy enough to put up with my knee. I think it most appropriate that Mr. Brown should show Mrs. Brown about.

[WALLACE brings the glass of water to MADGE.]

BOB (*going to KITTY*)

So do I. There's one spot that reminds me of something I used to be awfully keen about. I'd like to show it to you.

KITTY

How sweet of you! But Mr. Grainger has already promised to take me about. You said the view is especially lovely from—where did you say—Mr. Grainger?

WALLACE (*with a quick glance at MADGE*)

Well—a—are your shoes all right for it?

KITTY

My shoes are all right for anything. (*Going towards WALLACE.*) Bouci, I broke ten engagements today to get here, but it was worth it. I had no idea I was going to run into anything as delightful as this. Life's so much more unexpected than anything we can possibly make up—isn't it, *Mr. Grainger?* I can't help being—a—little excited that you *are* Mr. Grainger instead of Mr. Livingston.

[*She takes WALLACE onto the terrace. They move out of sight.*]

MADGE (*rising and standing with the glass of water in her hand*)

Well—*really*—what sort of a person *is* she, Boucicault?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*in her chair at Right*)

When a woman talks as much as that you may be sure she doesn't *mean* much. Isn't that so, Bob?

BOB

I think it would be rather hard to say—about the lady in question.

[*He takes the glass from MADGE and goes out onto the terrace—putting both glasses on the table—and moves out of sight at Right.*]

MADGE

She's quite obvious—it seems to *me*.

[*She sweeps out through the hall.*]

DIERDRE

Didn't you love it when she called Wallace Mr. Livingston? You needn't tell me she isn't *on*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*rising*)

Hold your tongue. Come on, Townley. Give me my stick. Bruce, where's my parasol? (TOWNLEY *gives her the stick which is leaning against her chair. BRUCE goes onto the terrace to get her parasol which he has left there.*) Somebody go in the house and amuse Madge.

TOWNLEY (*following MRS. BOUCICAULT as she moves towards the terrace*)

You don't expect me to *amuse you*—do you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Now don't *talk*, Townley—I'm tired of you all.
[*She moves off across the terrace like a ship—and out at Left—TOWNLEY in her wake.*]

BRUCE (*coming down Center as DIERDRE sits in BOUCICAULT's chair at Right*)

Awfully nice for some tennis now. Want to play?

DIERDRE

Um—no—I don't believe I do—thanks.

BRUCE

Why not?

DIERDRE

Well—I seem to have done enough. I think I'll call it a day.

BRUCE

It's been a pretty dumb day for me. I haven't seen anything of you at all.

DIERDRE

Well—don't you think it's rather a good idea not to be together *every* minute?

BRUCE

No I don't. Every minute I'm not with you is just so much time wasted.

DIERDRE

Now, Bruce, old thing, you can't keep *that* up.

BRUCE

You bet I can keep it up—for the rest of my life.

DIERDRE

You know you get bored with me, *once* in a while.

BRUCE (*going a little closer to her*)

Listen. If I was ever bored with you for a second—I wouldn't want to marry you.

DIERDRE (*trying to evade his seriousness*)

Now, darling—

BRUCE (*getting stronger as he goes on*)

And that's just exactly the way you felt about *me* till exactly three days ago when this Brown guy hove in sight. I'm jealous as a pup and pretty much scared and I think you're making a congenital idiot of yourself.

DIERDRE

Sweet mood you're in. (BOB comes from the terrace and starts toward the hall.) Oh, don't go, Bob. We're not going to fight.

BRUCE

Well what *are* we going to do?

DIERDRE

Must we do *anything*?

BOB

I've got a lot of things to do inside.

DIERDRE

No, you haven't. You're only—

KITTY (*Coming back from the terrace*)

These shoes won't do, after all. I'm going to get some others.

BOB

Mrs. Brown—I'm awfully anxious to ask you something about California—if you'll be good enough to give me just a minute.

WALLACE (*who has followed KITTY in*)

I'll come right back and wait for you here.

DIERDRE (*rising*)

Is this going to be a *secret* conference? Do you want us to go?

BRUCE

Yes he does. Come on with me—if you can *bear* it.

[*Giving DIERDRE a push as they go off across the terrace to the Right.*]

BOB (*after a pause*)

Why did you do this absurd thing? Why didn't you say who we are—at once?

KITTY

Why didn't you?

BOB

I couldn't speak. It was—

KITTY

Neither could I. It was all so quick. If we'd blurted it out at once—but we didn't—and it's infinitely better this way. Much more graceful.

BOB

It's ridiculous. I'm going to tell them now.

KITTY

Oh no you're not. I refuse to be made—a—conspicuous. It's done now—and much more comfortable this way—for everybody. Why spoil everybody's week end about a thing that is of no importance really? We were bound to run into each other, some time, some place.

BOB

I don't like it. There's no reason in the world why we shouldn't tell them.

KITTY

There's no reason in the world why we should. What possible difference can it make to anybody in any way? It will only be for such a little while. Any hostess would be grateful to us for keeping still—especially this one.

BOB

Do you want me to go in town?

KITTY (*turning back to look at BOB*)

And leave this nice girl? How absurd!

BOB

She's going to marry the boy.

KITTY

Oh, surely not.

BOB

What?

KITTY

That half baked boy? He isn't up to her. She's ready for life. She's gorgeous. I must tell you something. Boucci sent for me to take you away from her. Now you know that's rather good.

[*She laughs.*]

BOB

You can't be as hard as you seem.

KITTY

You didn't expect me to be soft—did you?

BOB

You're making them misunderstand you. They think you're a hard boiled woman of the world—to put it mildly. Is that what you want them to think?

KITTY

I think it's all a very amusing situation myself. For goodness sake, let's be gay about it.

BOB

I refuse to accept the situation. It's uncomfortable and absurd.

KITTY

If *this* is uncomfortable what would it be if you told? Curiosity—watching. Why did it happen?—Who began it? What was it?—Feeling *so* sorry for me because I lost you.

BOB

Oh—

KITTY

Spoiling the girl's fun.

BOB

Absurd.

KITTY (*with sudden fire*)

I won't have it *all brought back*. It's a *very* trivial thing to ask—it seems to me. I *do* ask it. I—I shall leave at once if you're going to do it.

BOB

If you put it that way—I won't.

KITTY

Thanks.

WALLACE (*coming back from the hall*)

I hope I haven't kept you waiting.

KITTY (*after a slight pause—remembering*)

Oh—my *shoes*. I won't be a minute. (*She gets her coat from the piano quickly and crosses to the hall entrance.*) Mr. Brown and I have found a distant relation—by marriage—but *very* distant.
[*She goes off quickly as the*

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

ACT TWO

SCENE I

Place: The same as Act One.

Time: Two days later—Sunday evening after dinner.

At curtain: MADGE LIVINGSTON comes into the room from the hall—very distinguished in a floating evening gown peculiar to herself. She is shaken with nervous excitement.

WALLACE GRAINGER *follows—trying to quiet her.*

WALLACE

But Madge—dearest—

MADGE

I can understand the *others*—but for *you* to be acting as if you'd never seen anything like her before in your—

WALLACE

She amuses me. She's refreshing. Why not? I'm stale, Madge—stale—stale—stale!

MADGE

You mean I don't inspire you any more.

WALLACE

Let's go outside. It's hot here.

MADGE (*with sudden tragic tears*)

Oh, Wallace—dearest—if what we have isn't *perfect*—if it isn't the most beautiful thing in the world it doesn't *justify* itself.

WALLACE

Why are you saying these things now? Nothing's *different*. You—

[MRS. BOUCICAULT and DIERDRE come in from the hall. MRS. BOUCICAULT is important in her characteristic evening gown. DIERDRE is striking and colorful.]

MADGE (*wiping her eyes*)

Forgive me for leaving the table, Boucicault. I couldn't listen to another one of her stories.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*sitting on the sofa at Left*)

I don't think they even know you've *left* the table, my dear.

DIERDRE

Kitty does you bet. Her technique is marvellous. Think I'll go back. I don't want to miss anything.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stay where you are. Here's the coffee. (*As WHITMAN and STRUTHERS come from Left on the terrace with the coffee, liqueurs, whiskey, soda, etc. which they put on the table outside.*) Keep it outside, Whitman, and put the bridge tables out there.

WHITMAN (*coming into the room*)

Pardon me, madam. I'm afraid there's too strong a breeze for playing outside.

BOUCICAULT

Outside.

WHITMAN (*with resignation—going back onto the terrace*)

Very good, madam.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

He's probably right. He always is—damn him. Go back, Wallace, and start them out. I want to get at the bridge or it will be midnight before we begin. (WALLACE *hesitates—glancing at MADGE who has moved to the piano where she carefully repairs her makeup.*) Well—what's the matter with *you*?—Too strong a breeze?

WALLACE

Why do we hesitate when you give orders?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Because you like to hear me bellow, I s'pose—so I'll think I'm having my own way. Go on. Do as I tell you.

[WALLACE *goes out through the hall.*]

DIERDRE

I'm crazy about you, Gran. You're so onto yourself.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Tell one of them to bring my coffee. I'll have it *here*.

DIERDRE (*starting onto the terrace*)

Have a real drink—anybody? You, Madge?

MADGE

No, thanks.

DIERDRE

You—darling?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No.—Neither will you.

DIERDRE

Oh, lay off, Gran. If Bob comes out tell him where I am.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

He seems to be lingering too—just as hypnotized with Kitty as the rest of 'em.

DIERDRE

You mean you *want* him to be. You're a scream, Gran.

MADGE

How in the world did you happen to ask her while Dierdre is here?

DIERDRE

While *I'm* here? Don't you love it? You don't have to put a crimp in your famous hospitality on *my* account—do you, pet?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Go on outside if you're going.

DIERDRE

You're awfully cunning. (*She giggles and comes back to her grandmother.*) I give you good on Kitty,

old fox—but it isn't working the way you *want* it to a little bit—is it?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't know what you're talking about.

MADGE

I suppose you think I don't either—but I'm afraid I do. I think Bruce is behaving extremely well.

DIERDRE (*with quick resentment*)

What's Bruce got to do with it?

MADGE

Has the man you're going to marry nothing to say about you falling in love with somebody else?

DIERDRE

Has the man you're married to nothing to say about the one you're in love with?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stop that kind of talk, Dierdre.

DIERDRE

I don't know why you expect me to be so different from anybody else.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I expect you to go about your business of marrying Bruce—and—let everybody else *alone*.

DIERDRE

And I expect to be *let* alone, Gran.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*pounding the floor with her stick*)
Stop it! You're forgetting who you are.

DIERDRE

I know damn well who I am. That's why I'm going to manage my own business.

[*She goes out onto the terrace and off at Left.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Old fool! The last thing on earth I expected to do—say anything to her.

MADGE (*rising and floating slowly to Center*)

Aren't they appalling? Would you have spoken to your grandmother like that?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—but it would have been a darned good thing for us both if I *had*. She was the meanest old woman I ever knew.

MADGE

Dierdre is going headlong right *at* the man. It's the openness—the casualness that shocks me.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Oh—you're shocked—are you?

MADGE

Aren't you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Yes—but I think I prefer her brazenness to your slyness.

MADGE (*going to sit in the large chair at Right*)

You hurt me.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Poppycock! Don't pose with me, Madge. She's the only one of the whole pack I care a hang about. I love her. I've actually been fool enough to let myself love her. I'd begun to have some pride in her. I'd begun to think the good old stock was coming out. Why did this thing have to hit her? *Why?* And no matter what happens I can't blame *her*. I blame myself and my respectable friends and the dis-respectable things they are doing.

MADGE (*rising*)

I won't stand the things you say to me!

MRS. BOUCICAULT

All right. Remind me to speak to Whitman about the soup. I won't stand *it* either. (*BOB strolls in from the hall and laughs as he hears this.*) Come here and give me a light, Bob. Are they moving in there at all yet?

BOB

Not yet. I thought I'd come out and remind you that you *have* some male guests, Boucicault. I think they've settled down for the evening. I don't think they're coming out at all.

[*Going to* MRS. BOUCICAULT *and opening his cigarette case.*]

MADGE (*standing near the piano*)

Too fascinated with the fascinating Mrs. Brown?

BOB

They seem to be. Which will you have—mine or yours?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You try one of mine.

[*Taking a tiny cigar from her case.*]

BOB

No, thanks. I'm afraid your little cigars are too strong for me.

[*Giving MRS. BOUCICAULT a light.*]

MADGE (*frowning at the cigar*)

How can you, Boucicault?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*with a puff of satisfaction*)

They've saved me from being "among those present" on many an occasion. The second time I met King Edward and he called me by name—right off the trigger—I said, "Ah, your majesty, it's my cigar you remember." And he said, "Ah, no, madam, your personality is so much stronger than your cigar." He was a great man.

[*She imitates the king with a slight German accent.*]

BOB (*going to MADGE to light her cigarette*)

You've known a great collection, haven't you, Boucicault—sitting on thrones and wallowing in the gutter.

BOUCICAULT

They've all been the best of *their* kind. I will say that for 'em.

BOB (*moving back to Center as he lights his own cigarette*)

It's high time you wrote your memoirs—the truth—the whole truth and nothing but the truth about my famous friends.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I don't propose to spend the rest of my life in jail.

DIERDRE (*coming back into the room with a cup of coffee in one hand and a highball in the other*)

Here you are, Gran.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*taking the coffee*)

I thought you'd fallen in it and died.

DIERDRE

Bob, Gran thinks Kitty's much more alluring than I am. How about it? Do you?

BOB

You both have your points. Is that for me?
[*Indicating the highball.*]

DIERDRE

It *is* not.

BOB

I think it would be a good idea if I had one, too.
[*They turn towards the terrace. Voices are heard, and KITTY comes in from the hall with TOWNLEY, WALLACE and BRUCE. MADGE hurries to sit in the large chair Right.*]

KITTY

It was this one song which made her the chic of

Paris. Not much of a song and she can't sing. She has no voice—no looks—no style—but *Oh*, the things she *has* got.

[KITTY *is very chic in a ravishing evening gown, and carries a charming fan.*]

BOUCICAULT

Who's that you're talking about?

KITTY (*going to the piano*)

You remember—Fifine. We heard her—her first night in Paris. You said, "Thank heaven for somebody more diverting than my guests."

MRS. BOUCICAULT

See here—when you quote me—make it agreeable.

KITTY (*standing before the keyboard*)

Nobody would believe you said it, lamb. Will someone be sweet enough to move the piano—just a little nearer?

[KITTY *sits and dashes off a brilliant bit of music. MADGE slowly realizes that KITTY has imitated her and rises with great hauteur and sweeps out onto the terrace.*]

KITTY

Am I disturbing anyone?

TOWNLEY (*standing close to KITTY*)

Yes—very successfully.

WALLACE (*leaning over the piano at the upper side of it—not having seen MADGE leave the room*)

Do you know "*Paree*"?

KITTY

Yes.

[*Playing a little of the song—and then beginning it again as WALLACE sings it.*]

BRUCE (*after the first strain—speaking to MRS. BOUCICAULT as he too leans on the piano at the end*)

That's not what he *thinks* he's singing.

WALLACE

Certainly it is. It's a good song.

KITTY (*playing again*)

Come along.

DIERDRE

Give the song a chance, Wallie.

[KITTY *plays—nodding to them all to make them sing.* WALLACE *goes on with the song—this time TOWNLEY and BRUCE sing with him—KITTY joining in a little.* BOB *whistles without watching the group at the piano.* DIERDRE, *with her highball glass—dances a little—before BOB.*]

KITTY (*as they finish the first of the song—playing a softer strain and speaking as she plays*)

A divine boy sang it all the way over on the boat.

DIERDRE (*calling across to KITTY*)

I love your frock, Kitty.

KITTY (*talking to TOWNLEY who is bending over her as she plays*)

Only twenty.

DIERDRE

What—the frock?

KITTY

No—the boy.

TOWNLEY

I was divine at twenty.

KITTY (*smiling up at him.*)

You still are.

WALLACE

We all are.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*on the sofa*)

Keep still. I can't hear what you're saying.

[KITTY *keeps on playing.*]

WALLACE (*raising his voice to* MRS. BOUCICAULT)

I say we *all* are.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What?

BRUCE (*to* MRS. BOUCICAULT)

He says we *all* are.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*impatiently*)

You all are *what*?

KITTY

Don't you know what we all are?

[*She dashes into the chorus and they all sing again—
with more abandon and embellishment.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*as they finish*)

Is that you making that particularly bad noise, Townley?

TOWNLEY

No—I'm making the tenor.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Well, *stop* it.

KITTY

No—don't. It makes the rest of us seem so good. (*MADGE comes in from the terrace—stares at WALLACE and sweeps through out into the hall. As KITTY plays—she smiles at WALLACE.*) I think you're being paged.

WALLACE

What?

[*He turns and sees MADGE and goes out after her. BOB joins KITTY and TOWNLEY at the piano. She goes on playing. MRS. BOUCICAULT rises and goes onto the terrace.*]

BRUCE (*going to DIERDRE, and speaking to her in low tones*)

Let's hop in the pool. It's so beastly hot.

DIERDRE

Oh, Lord—not yet. We've just had dinner.

BRUCE

I mean after while.

DIERDRE

Gran wants to play bridge—anyway. You can't buck that.

BRUCE

We could sneak out. Moon and everything. It'll be great.

DIERDRE

Yes I know—but—I'm not sure I want to.

BRUCE

You've been keen enough about going in with *him* every night.

[DIERDRE *is watching* BOB *who is bending over the piano—whistling as* KITTY *plays.*]

KITTY (*to* BOB)

Do you sing?

BOB

I've let it slide. No incentive. I've let a lot of things go—in the last few years.

KITTY

Have you, really? I seem to have been rather busy picking things up in the last few years.

BOB

Such as—?

TOWNLEY

Me?

KITTY (*laughing*)

Exactly.

[TOWNLEY *strolls out onto the terrace.*]

DIERDRE (*listening to the music*)

What is that, Bob?

[BOB *doesn't hear her.*]

BRUCE

For Heaven's sake—Dierdre— What *is* this? Have you gone off your head about him?

DIERDRE

What shall we do about it if I have?

BRUCE

Come outside. We're going to talk this thing out right *now*.

DIERDRE

What's the use? I know every bloomin' thing you're going to say—and I don't know *what* I want to say—yet.

BRUCE

You—

DIERDRE

That's straight, Bruce. Let me alone for awhile—please—old man. We'd only ball it up now.

[BRUCE *strides out*. TOWNLEY *moves down to DIERDRE and they go onto the terrace together and out of sight at Left.*]

BOB (*bending over KITTY and playing a few notes with one hand*)

Do you remember this? (KITTY *plays and he sings* "If Love were All." *She stops suddenly after the second strain and stands up.*) Don't go, Kitty—I want to talk to you.

KITTY (*moving away a little*)

What on earth have we to talk about?

BOB

Plenty of things.

KITTY

For instance?

BOB

Ourselves. You. There are lots of things I want to ask you.

KITTY

I can't imagine myself answering any of them.

BOB

I'm afraid you'll have to answer one or two.

KITTY

Which ones?

BOB

I've got to talk to you, Kitty. That's all there is about it. Now when? Where?

KITTY (*moving towards* MRS. BOUCICAULT *as she comes back from the terrace*)

What an interesting old chain, Bouci. Chinese, isn't it?

[*Touching one of the chains about* MRS. BOUCICAULT'S *neck.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Is it any good?

DIERDRE (*coming from the terrace and going to sit on the sofa*)

Granny never knows whether the objects d'art

she collects around her neck are junk or pearls without price.

KITTY

Where did it come from, Bouci?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

A pawn shop probably. It can't be worth much.

KITTY

Why not?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Because I know who gave it to me.

KITTY

Who did?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

My late husband. (*Turning away.*) Where are Madge and Wallace?

[*She goes onto the terrace and off at Left.*]

TOWNLEY (*who has come back from the terrace during these lines and now moves to KITTY as MRS. BOUCICAULT goes away*)

Are you wearing anything *your* late husband gave you?

KITTY (*touching a small string of pearls*)

Oh, yes—these—modest but pure.

BOB

Do you wear them to remember him by?

KITTY

No—I remember him very well. Quite distinctly

in fact. He was one of the most attractive men I've ever known, and as men go—I still think so.

TOWNLEY

My God—why did you divorce him then? If a woman feels that way about a man, why doesn't she hang on to him?

KITTY

He didn't hang on to me.

TOWNLEY

Oh, come!

KITTY

No—really.

BOB

That's very interesting. Just what do you mean by not hanging on?

DIERDRE

Why did you divorce him?

KITTY (*after a pause, looking at DIERDRE*)

Because of a girl so much like you, that it's funny—almost.

[*Glancing swiftly at BOB, who goes towards the terrace quickly.*]

DIERDRE

Lucky nobody has to divorce *you* because of me, Bob. Come on.

[*She takes BOB's arm. They stop under the balcony at Left to talk.*]

TOWNLEY

I'm so grateful to Boucicault for you, Kitty. Usually I'm called in to take on a woman with a club foot or something—because she amused Bouci once in—*Labrador*. When she gets her here, she wants to shoot her and sends for me.

KITTY (*sitting in the large chair at Right*)

Have you got a cigarette, Townley?

[TOWNLEY goes to sit on the seat below KITTY's chair and lights her cigarette. They talk in low tones.]

MRS. BOUCICAULT comes from the terrace trying to hear what DIERDRE is saying to BOB as they stand under the balcony at Left.]

DIERDRE

Let's hop in the pool after while. It's so beastly hot.

BOB

Is it? I don't think so.

DIERDRE

Oh—you don't *need* the pool to cool off. Why the sudden drop in temperature?

BOB

All your imagination.

DIERDRE

Am I as dark and glowing and mysterious as ever?

BOB

You're marvellous.

DIERDRE

What are you looking at?

[*As he glances at KITTY.*]

BOB

I'm looking at you.

DIERDRE (*lifting her face close to his*)

And I'm looking at you, darling—and seeing the most wonderful things in the world.

BOB (*touching her highball glass*)

Isn't that enough?

DIERDRE

Don't be so paternal. Come on. You need one yourself.

[DIERDRE *goes out*—BOB *follows her.*]

KITTY

Townie, are you trying to persuade me you've fallen in love with me or is this just your week-end charm?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*coming down to KITTY*)

Go on, Townley.

TOWNLEY (*rising*)

Where shall I go?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Go to hell.

KITTY (*calling to TOWNLEY as he goes*)

And if you *return*—bring me some *very* hot coffee.

[TOWNLEY *goes onto the terrace to the table to get the coffee.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*suddenly flaring at KITTY*)

Why don't you do what I want you to do? Get Bob Brown away from Dierdre?

KITTY (*rising quickly*)

Really, Bouci, this is rather disgusting. You're putting a ridiculous thing up to me—an impossible thing.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You're efficient enough with the others. Why are you so mulish about it? This is the first time I've seen you even *speak* to Bob. I've been watching Dierdre. I heard something she said to him just now. Help me, Kitty.

KITTY

I've been watching her too. She *is* in love with him. Why on earth don't you let them alone? Isn't your Bob Brown as good as the other one for her to marry—better—since he's the one she really wants?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

He hasn't the slightest intention of marrying her—and she's throwing herself *at* him. Hot headed young daredevil! Anything could happen. I'm *frightened*, Kitty. (*TOWNLEY comes back with a cup of coffee.*) What *is* it, Townley? Go away. Go away and mind your own business.

TOWNLEY

This *is* my business. Don't snort at me, angel. I was sent for this.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*going towards the terrace*) Well now that you've brought it in, see if you can take it out again. Come on. They're all out here now.

KITTY (*reaching for the coffee*)

Oh, don't take that away from me. I can't bear it.

[TOWNLEY *turns to* KITTY—*giving her the cup. They stand at Right, talking.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*as MADGE and WALLACE come in from the hall*)

Well—where have *you* been? I thought you were on the terrace.

KITTY (*to* TOWNLEY)

I've never seen her as bad as this.

TOWNLEY

Old girl's on the rampage about something.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Where *are* you, Townley?

TOWNLEY (*hurrying to* BOUCICAULT *as she stops with* WALLACE *and* MADGE *up under the balcony*)

Right under your feet, dearest.

MADGE

Come and get my liqueur, Wallace.

[MADGE *goes onto the terrace and out of sight at Right. WALLACE starts after her. TOWNLEY and* MRS. BOUCICAULT *go off Left.*]

KITTY (*dropping her handkerchief and imitating* MADGE)

Oh—my handkerchief.

[WALLACE goes down to KITTY. He picks up her handkerchief—gives it to her and stands before her—flattered and having lost his head a little.]

WALLACE

The last verse has just come to me.

KITTY

Is it as lovely as the others?

WALLACE

More so. It's *you*.

KITTY

I'm thrilled pink. That's one thing that's never happened to me—poetry.

WALLACE

I haven't done this in years—you know. "Shadows of understanding in her eyes. Shadows of happiness gone—"

KITTY

Oh! Shadows. I s'pose that's all right so long as you don't say *lines* under her eyes. When are you going to read it all to me?

WALLACE

When will you let me? Why don't we cut this?

KITTY

I'd love to—but where can we go?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*coming into sight with TOWNLEY up Left on the terrace*)

Now look at that ass! Wallace—Madge is waiting

for that drink. (WALLACE *goes to* BOUCICAULT.)
Haven't you got the sense you were born with?

WALLACE

No. Do you know anybody who has?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—I don't. You go slow on those shadows.

[MRS. BOUCICAULT *goes out*—WALLACE *follows her.*]

TOWNLEY

Wait.

KITTY

I don't dare.

TOWNLEY

Tomorrow will be here before we know it—and we'll all be gone. Have dinner with me tomorrow night in town.

KITTY

Oh—I don't think I can.

TOWNLEY

Of course you can. Why can't you? How many days are you going to be in town?

KITTY (*sitting on the upper arm of the large chair—her back to the audience, sipping her coffee*)

I don't know.

TOWNLEY

Yes you do.

KITTY

Two—three—maybe.

TOWNLEY

I'll take you to a nice little place up the river—cheap and cool and—

KITTY

Nobody there?

TOWNLEY

Yes.

KITTY

I have to think.

TOWNLEY

What about?

KITTY

I don't know.

[*They laugh. There is a great attraction between them.*]

TOWNLEY

I'm not going to lose you.

KITTY

Sweet of you.

TOWNLEY

Give me something more to remember than this. I've got to talk to you. Let's get away.

[*BOB has crossed the terrace at back—coming on from the left—and going to the table where he pours a cup of coffee.*]

KITTY

How can we?

TOWNLEY (*whispering*)

You have a balcony.

KITTY

Oh—so I have—with steps.

TOWNLEY

You're a darling. Thanks.

[*He kisses her hand as BOB comes down to Right of KITTY with a cup of coffee.*]

BOB

I was sent with this and told to bring you out—
after you had finished it.

KITTY (*still sitting on the arm of the chair*)

Oh—(*Taking the cup.*) thanks. I need it.

TOWNLEY (*To BROWN as KITTY gives him the other empty cup*)

You're not trying to get rid of me—by any chance?

BOB

No—by firm intention. (*To KITTY.*) Will you take me on at bridge?

KITTY

Were you coached to say that—too?

BOB

No—that's on my own.

KITTY

Are you good?

BOB

Very.

KITTY (*sipping her coffee*)

It might be unlucky—for the Browns to play together.

TOWNLEY

It would. You don't want to play anyway. Why don't we rise up and defy the old girl?

BOB

Have you ever tried it?

KITTY

We must do *something*—and it isn't ten o'clock yet.

TOWNLEY

But Boucicault's a fiend. She never stops and I always lose my shirt.

KITTY

Never mind. I'll give you one of mine.

BRUCE (*coming into sight on terrace at Left*)

You'd better come quick, Townley—to avoid a blow-out.

[BRUCE *goes back again.*]

TOWNLEY (*as he goes up to table with the cup and off Left*)

I *am* a worm. Why don't I turn?

KITTY (*rising and taking her fan from the small table below the large chair*)

The situation is getting more amusing every minute. Isn't it?

BOB

No. I don't think it is. It's getting more ridiculous every minute. We ought to have told them in the first place. Let's tell them now. It would clear the whole atmosphere.

KITTY

The atmosphere doesn't need clearing. Surely you aren't embarrassed—are you? *Don't* let my being here make the slightest difference to you in any way.

BOB

About Dierdre—you mean?

KITTY

About anything.

BOB

You don't think I'm in love with her?

KITTY

Aren't you? I'm no judge—of *that*.

BOB

And you don't think for a minute she's—it's anything serious with *her*?

KITTY

Oh—isn't it? I should have said it was something very serious. But perhaps I'm no judge of that either.

BOB

You're implying a lot—but you surely don't think I was skunk enough to go after her.

KITTY (*moving away*)

And you surely don't think you have to explain anything to me.

BOB

I want you to know how it is. I *was* flirting with her—a little—a little too much—perhaps—before you came—but seeing you has made me stop.

KITTY

Oh—sorry. (*Half turning back to him.*) But I'll be gone in the morning—and it will be just as though I'd never been here at all.

[*Starting again to go.*]

BOB

Wait—*please*.

KITTY

Yes?

BOB

I'm not going to ask to see the children—though I want to—horribly.

KITTY (*having looked at him quickly with startled wistful eyes—and speaking with difficulty*)

Bob—it *is* better for them to know only one side—even if that side is—*me*.

BOB

Are they well?

KITTY

Very. Robert is getting to be more like you every minute. And Katherine is marvellous.

BOB (*looking at her eagerly and moving a little towards her*)

Like you?

KITTY

Yes—only more so.

BOB

I hope she'll be just exactly like you—*just exactly*—as you *were*, I mean.

KITTY

She won't, I assure you. She'll be much more intelligent—and much more *prepared*. I believe in preparedness.

BOB

You've changed, Kitty.

KITTY

I hope so. Three years of Paris ought to improve any woman.

BOB

You seem to have had a pretty good time.

KITTY

I've been awfully lucky in the people I've known. Gay, delightful people.

BOB

Like these—you mean?

KITTY

Um—all sorts.

BOB

Tell me some more. You might sit down a minute at least. What have you actually been doing—all this time?

[*She hesitates in a long pause and then sits on the sofa back of her. BOB brings the arm chair and sits before KITTY.*]

KITTY

I've been working hard, too.

BOB

At what?

KITTY

Clothes. I've made a good connection with a firm in Paris, and I'm going to have a shop out home.

BOB

What?

KITTY

Yes. It will keep me going back and forth, which I shall adore. I can stand one place because I'll always know I'm going to the other.

BOB

Um. There's something in that—*possibly*. Though the further I go the more I see I'd like to stay put—once I get in the right place.

KITTY

Are there any right places?

BOB

There's just *one*—for me. But I'm not *in* it. (KITTY

is about to rise. He goes on quickly.) Well—and?

KITTY

I think that's about all—except that in a little while I shan't have to have any more alimony—I can take care of the children myself.

BOB

You'll do nothing of the kind.

KITTY

Certainly I will.

BOB

We'll see about that.

KITTY

There's something about one's own money—making it and spending it—that has—I know now how a man feels—only—he takes it for granted—and it's a new thrill to me.

BOB

And when you're not working?

KITTY

Like you I've been amusing myself with anything and everything that came my way. I know how a man feels about that too.

BOB

You're very glib but I don't know just what you mean. What—do you—exactly?

DIERDRE (*coming on from the terrace with her high-ball*) What is this? Are you trying to vamp Bob—Kitty?

KITTY (*still sitting*)

You evidently don't think I could.

DIERDRE

I don't think you *would*—under the circ. I think you *could* get any man you want. Don't you, Bob?

BOB (*putting the chair back and going down Right Center*)

There doesn't seem to be any doubt about that.

KITTY (*to DIERDRE*)

What would you do if I did? Would it be a joke or a tragedy to you?

DIERDRE (*lifting her face to BOB*)

Bob knows what it would mean to me. Don't you, Bob?

KITTY

Oh—well—if Bob knows what *you* mean—and you know what *he* means—nothing else matters. Does it?

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*coming in from the terrace*)

We have to play in here after all. The wind blows the cards away—confound it!

KITTY

Are you going to let me play with you, Bouci?
[*Standing up and moving out of the way as WHIT-MAN comes in with a card table and chairs.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Yes—with Bob—over here.

[STRUTHERS *has brought on a card table and chairs which he places at Right.*]

KITTY (*to BOB*)

You'd much better play over there. If you take me on you'll have to be a good loser as well as a good player.

BOB

It depends on what I'm losing—how good I am.

DIERDRE

You're going to play with me.

BOB

I don't think I can.

[DIERDRE *draws BOB to the table at Right and goes on talking to him a little desperately in low tones. KITTY has watched this an instant—and then turns to TOWNLEY who is standing at MRS. BOUCICAULT'S Right. KITTY, TOWNLEY and MRS. BOUCICAULT all talk at once—very gaily for a moment. The SERVANTS go out. MADGE and WALLACE are seen on the terrace.*]

KITTY (*heard above the others after a moment*)

You play *against* me, Townley. You're probably worse than I am.

TOWNLEY

I'm rather good—but erratic.

KITTY

That's what all rotten players say. Where do you want me—Bouci?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Right there. Put that light over my shoulder, Townley.

[TOWNLEY *gets the lamp—which is up Left.*]

KITTY (*as she sits at Right of table*)

I need more than a light over my shoulder when I play with *you*, Bouci. If I didn't love you so much dearest, I'd hate you.

TOWNLEY (*coming to sit below the table*)

I *do* hate her—when I play cards with her.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

How do you suppose I feel about you—when I have to play with you?

BOB (*Sitting below the table at Right*)

Be careful, Dierdre! You don't know what you're doing.

DIERDRE (*Sitting at Right of Right table*)

I know what I'm doing and what I want. Oh, Bob—I'm crazy about you.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bob—come over here.

KITTY (*as BOB crosses to the Left table*)

Too bad Mr. Brown can't be in two places at once.

BOB (*sitting at Left—opposite KITTY*)

This place will do for me.

[BRUCE comes on to the terrace from the Right and goes quickly down to DIERDRE—sitting above the table—pleading with her to stop drinking.]

KITTY

What are we playing for?

BOB

Anything you say.

TOWNLEY

Anything you say—so long as you make it about twenty-five cents a point—for Bouci.

KITTY

Oh my soul! Who's going to pay my losses? Are you?

TOWNLEY

Yes—if you'll take a bad check.

[*They cut and deal, all talking at once.*]

BRUCE (*heard at the other table*)

Put on the brakes, Dierdre. You've had enough.

DIERDRE

Don't be young.

BRUCE

For heaven's sake, let up. Why do you do it? What's there *in* it?

DIERDRE

Not a thing. (*Turning her glass upside down.*) Not a damned thing. Go *put* something in it.

BRUCE

You can't have any more.

[*WALLACE has come down from the terrace and stands above KITTY—watching the game. MADGE tries to draw him away to the other table.*]

DIERDRE

You give me a pain in the ear, beloved. Whitman—bring me a highball! Oh, look who's here! The Lady Madge!

[*As MADGE and WALLACE come to sit at table Right MADGE sits Left of table. WALLACE below it. KITTY is leaning toward TOWNLEY, talking to him.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Kitty! Keep your mind on your game.

KITTY

I don't play bridge with my mind.

TOWNLEY

What do you use?

KITTY

Just my hands.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Stop talking. What do you make it, Bob?

BOB

By.

TOWNLEY

A heart.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*glaring at TOWNLEY*)

What?

TOWNLEY

A heart—dear heart.

KITTY

Three spades!

TOWNLEY

Oh, God.

KITTY

Ask him to help *me* too.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

By.

BOB

Pass.

TOWNLEY

By.

DIERDRE (*giggling as WALLACE deals*)

Is that a club or a spade hopping around, Wallie?
[*Showing a card to WALLACE.*]

MADGE

Well really! Are we playing—or are we not?

DIERDRE

We're playing, old dear. *And how!*

WALLACE

Go on, child—call it a spade.

DIERDRE

That's all right by me. Funny looking little things
aren't they? Hi—Whitman—
[*Banging her glass on the table.*]

BRUCE

Let up, Dierdre.

KITTY (*who is playing while BOB is dummy*)

Don't tell me I took that trick, Mr. Brown. There must be something wrong.

BOB (*rather grimly*)

You either played it very cleverly or very *innocently*—I'm not sure which.

KITTY

Innocence is not my long suit.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*throwing down a card and shouting at TOWNLEY*)

You should have trumped my ace—idiot.

TOWNLEY

What?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Certainly. It's the only way in God's name you could make it.

TOWNLEY

Are you spoofing me?

KITTY

No, she's *cursing* you. Poor darling! This is one of those purple moments when the most brilliant thing you can do is to do the thing you've been trying all your life *not* to do.

DIERDRE (*getting up*)

There—I'm dummy now. I'm going over there.
[*Pointing to the left table.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Sit down, Dierdre.

DIERDRE

Kitty, do you know why Gran got you here?

BRUCE (*trying to make DIERDRE sit down*)

Dierdre, stop it.

DIERDRE

To get Bob away from me. But it can't be done.
Can it, Bob?

BOUCICAULT (*in a low tone to BOB*)

Can't you *do* something?

[KITTY *lowers her head*. BRUCE *has pulled* DIERDRE *down into her chair where she fights him*.]

BOB (*rising*)

Let's go outside, Dierdre. It's too hot to play—isn't it? Why don't we—

TOWNLEY (*rising*)

Yes— Let's get out in the air.

[MADGE *rises and moves away*.]

DIERDRE (*getting up again*)

Bob wants to shut me up. Look at him.

BOB

Not at all. But come and say it to *me*. I don't think anybody else is—

DIERDRE (*moving towards KITTY—very unsteadily*)

But I want Kitty to *know*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bruce, take her out of the room.

DIERDRE

Why should I leave the room? I'm a great deal more decent than anybody *in it*.

[*Sitting heavily in the chair which MADGE left.*]

KITTY (*lifting her head quickly and throwing her cards on the table*)

I don't think there's any doubt about *that*. Why don't we *all* leave the room—in the order of our sins?

TOWNLEY

That's a good idea. I'll start the procession.

[*He goes to Center and up towards the terrace—stopping at upper left as KITTY speaks.*]

KITTY

I'll come next.

[*She goes up—stopping as DIERDRE calls out.*]

DIERDRE

But Kitty—I want you to *know*.

BRUCE (*in a low tone to DIERDRE—standing above her*)

Dierdre—*please*.

DIERDRE

I can't help it, Bruce.

[*BRUCE turns away quickly and goes on to terrace and off at Right.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You've disgraced yourself, Dierdre.

KITTY

Why do you say that, Bouci? She's only telling the truth. I think it's delightful.

DIERDRE

Gran thinks I'm tight.

[Her head drops a little over the back of the chair.]

KITTY (*going to DIERDRE*)

Just chatty—aren't you? I am too—when I've had a drink or two. If this had been me—instead of you—my word—the things I could have told about the first time I fell in love. Couldn't you, Mr. Brown?

BOB (*standing at the Left of the table*)

I don't think anybody would be interested.

KITTY

Oh, it's always amusing. Why don't we make it an "I confess" game—and cross our hearts to be as honest as Dierdre? How many times has it been the first time with you, Townie?

TOWNLEY

Well—a—You'll have to give me a few minutes to think.

KITTY

While he's thinking—will you, Madge? May I call you Madge? We're all getting so cosy and real now.

MADGE

I find this excessively disagreeable, *Mrs. Brown*.

DIERDRE

Bob, you tell Kitty how it is with us.

BOB

Don't, Dierdre!

DIERDRE

You wouldn't take him away from me, would you, Kitty? You *mustn't* now.

KITTY

No danger of that—is there, Mr. Brown?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Dierdre, leave this room!

DIERDRE

No! I want to tell—

KITTY

Come on, dear. Come outside and tell me. I know just how you feel. How could you resist Bob.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Katherine! Are you upholding Dierdre?

KITTY

I'll do my best. She's a little tall for me.

BOUCICAULT

Katherine, I'm ashamed of you.

KITTY

That's good, Bouci. I'm ashamed of *you*, too. You've been very naughty with your heavy intrigue. I told you I wasn't clever enough for this job.

BOB

What job?

KITTY

Oh, to get you, and have you and hold you, forever.

MADGE

Boucicault, I can't stand this brazenness!

KITTY

Now if it were *Wallie* you wanted me to take away from somebody—there's no telling *what* might have happened.

[*She smiles at WALLACE—much to his excited embarrassment—and turns towards the terrace as the*

CURTAIN FALLS

ACT TWO

SCENE II

Time: About an hour after Scene I.

Place: The balcony onto which KITTY's room opens. Narrow steps lead down at the left end. Below the line of the balcony the stage is in darkness.

Two long French windows with shutters open onto the balcony—one from KITTY's room—one from a room at the Right. The shutters of the room at Right are closed—the room in darkness.

The shutters at KITTY's windows are open—a dim light in the room.

At curtain: the stage is empty.

PERKINS (*after a moment, from within*)

Yes, madam. No—I don't think so, madam. (*A pause.*) I beg pardon? (*She comes on to the balcony.*) Oh yes it is—full.

KITTY (*inside—not seen*)

Ravishing— isn't it?

PERKINS

It's very nice, madam—if you like it.

KITTY

Can't you do better than that for the moon, Perkins?

PERKINS (*folding the red velvet coat she holds*)

I don't care for it myself. It's too spooky.

KITTY (*coming onto the balcony wearing a very charming dressing robe*)

Skip along now. Mrs. Boucicault needs you and I don't. And bring my coffee at eight. Don't wait for me to ring. I'm taking an early train to town.

[*She stands at the railing looking down.*]

PERKINS

Yes, madam.

KITTY

Good night, Perkins.

PERKINS

Good night, madam. Thank you.

[*PERKINS goes in. The glow of a cigarette is seen below in the darkness.*]

KITTY (*laughing softly as she looks over the railing*)

Not really!

TOWNLEY

Inevitably.

KITTY

You're too amusing.

TOWNLEY

I'm coming up.

KITTY

Oh—I thought you were taking a walk.

TOWNLEY (*starting up the steps*)

My God, how they creak!

KITTY

You don't mind, do you?

TOWNLEY

Not if they don't break down.

KITTY

Shake 'em. How do they feel?

TOWNLEY (*his head and shoulders seen as he climbs up*)
Very frail.

KITTY

Oh! The whole thing's coming down!

TOWNLEY

That'll be all right—after I get up. How pretty you are in that light!

KITTY

You look *better* yourself.

TOWNLEY

Where do we sit?

KITTY

We don't.

TOWNLEY

Oh yes we do.

[*Drawing KITTY down onto the top step.*]

KITTY

I don't think it's safe.

TOWNLEY

Thanks.

KITTY

I mean architecturally speaking.

TOWNLEY (*looking along the balcony*)

Anybody next to you—architecturally speaking?

KITTY

I haven't seen anyone. Don't tell me you'd be—embarrassed if you were discovered here?

TOWNLEY

I'd be terribly flattered. Would you be—ashamed of me?

KITTY

Oh—most *proud*. Why shouldn't I be proud of an irresistible man sitting on my door step?

TOWNLEY

No reason—so long as you don't resist him.

KITTY (*by way of changing the subject*)

Sweet out here. I'm sorry I didn't discover this before.

TOWNLEY

So am I—

KITTY

Listen! There's a bird—way off.

TOWNLEY

Calling to his mate. I didn't come up here to listen to bird notes—you know.

[*He kisses her arm. She draws it away.*]

TOWNLEY

Why that? Don't you like me as well as you thought you were going to—before I came up?

KITTY

More—so far.

TOWNLEY

How is it—*really*—Kitty dear?

KITTY

You're a sweet person. I told you that the minute I saw you.

TOWNLEY

But you've had two more days of me. How is it now?

KITTY

I haven't liked anyone so much in—oh, I don't know when.

TOWNLEY

I haven't liked anyone so much—ever. It's marvelous to like a girl and fall in love with her too. That's how it is with me—Kitty.

KITTY

You're perfect.

TOWNLEY

You're pretending you don't believe me—but you do. You're the most—*Damn!*
[*Slapping his ankle.*]

KITTY

Smoke—smoke—hard.

[KITTY *leans forward—her elbows on her knees.*]

TOWNLEY

What are you thinking about?

KITTY

Nothing.

TOWNLEY

Meaning me?

KITTY

No—that girl—Dierdre Lessing.

TOWNLEY

You were a peach. Rather messy—wasn't it?

KITTY

It happens so often one gets used to it.

TOWNLEY

But it always makes me slightly ill—somehow—to see a nice girl get drunk. I suppose I'm much too fastidious.

KITTY

Much.

TOWNLEY

It also rather gets my goat to see them go after a man quite as openly as she went after Brown.

KITTY

I'm awfully sorry for her.

TOWNLEY

In the name of heaven why?

KITTY

She's in love with him.

TOWNLEY

She's made a fool of herself.

KITTY

Oh, I don't know. He must have encouraged her.

TOWNLEY

Well— What's a man to *do*? Brown's a bit fed up, I should say. Men *are*. Even I—in all modesty—prefer to do my own pursuing—but they won't let me.

KITTY

Poor you! Besieged, I s'pose.

TOWNLEY

That's why I'm so mad about you—Kitty. You've kept me—a—

KITTY

What?

TOWNLEY

Wondering.

KITTY

Is the wondering all over?

TOWNLEY

Um—when in doubt—detour. You've got the prettiest ears I ever saw. I wanted to kiss the right one all through dinner, especially with the salad.

KITTY

Why didn't you?

TOWNLEY

I'll do it now.

KITTY

Oh no. It would be so commonplace now—and it would have been so diverting for everybody then.

TOWNLEY

You were letting Grainger divert you in the other ear—in French.

KITTY

I had no idea he was so brilliant.

TOWNLEY

See here—ought I to be worried about Grainger?

KITTY

You ought not to be worried about *anything*.

TOWNLEY

At first I was afraid of Brown. When I got on to Boucicault's scheme I thought you'd mow him down just to please the old girl. I thought it would rouse your sporting blood when you saw the layout.

KITTY

Ah, but you see—you were here.

[*A light is seen through the shutters in the room at Right.*]

TOWNLEY

I've fallen in love with you, Kitty. What are you going to do about it?

KITTY

We'll talk about that at dinner tomorrow night.
We'll go on from here.

TOWNLEY

We'll go on *now*.

KITTY (*standing up*)

We'll say good night now—and *drop* down this time.
Don't risk the steps.

TOWNLEY (*stepping onto the balcony beside KITTY*)

Don't be in such a hurry to get rid of me.

KITTY

I'm only giving you a—suggestion.

TOWNLEY

I don't need it. I know where I'm going.

KITTY

Oh, *do* you?

TOWNLEY

So do you. Don't you?

KITTY

You think so?

TOWNLEY

You're very wise and very *sure*—aren't you? I love you beautifully, Kitty. What are you going to do with me?

KITTY (*moving to her door*)

I'm going to say good night to you now.

TOWNLEY

But I haven't told you how I—

KITTY

But go now while I'm still dying to hear it.

TOWNLEY (*catching her hand*)

Why did you let me come?

KITTY

Because I wanted you to, of course. Why not?

TOWNLEY

Then don't send me away.

KITTY

Townie. Keep charming and clever. I want to see you again. Good night.

[*He kisses her throat. She moves away from him into her doorway.*]

TOWNLEY (*moving beside her*)

Kitty, I'm mad about you. I can't go.

KITTY

I like you frightfully, Townley—don't spoil it.

TOWNLEY

Kiss me good night then—

KITTY

No—No!

TOWNLEY

But I—

[*He kisses her. BOB throws open the shutters at*

Right and comes onto the balcony. KITTY hears the noise and pushes TOWNLEY out of sight, inside her door.]

BOB

Kitty!

KITTY

Oh—it's *your* room! Fancy *that*!

BOB

Kitty, you don't believe anything that girl said—
(KITTY *shakes her head at* BOB.) What's the matter?
No one can hear us. There's no one about. I
don't know what she told you, but you've got to
know I haven't done anything you could object
to.

KITTY (*calling*)

Townley—did you find the cigarettes? Come out.
(*A pause. TOWNLEY comes out.*) That's Mr.
Brown's room. Isn't it amusing? We were won-
dering. We've been sitting on the steps—smoking—
to keep the mosquitoes away. They're awfully bad
tonight—aren't they. The vines I s'pose. Mr. Town-
ley was just going. Perhaps you'll stay now. Per-
haps you'll bring out some chairs, Mr. Brown? (*The
men stare at each other amazed—embarrassed.*) No?
Oh—well—I'll see you tomorrow night, Townie. Bet-
ter ring me up in the afternoon at three—*sharp*.
I'll be awfully busy all day. What?

TOWNLEY (*after a slight pause*)

I'm afraid I don't understand quite.

KITTY

You will. I shall have something frightfully amusing to tell you at dinner. Good night.

TOWNLEY

It seems Boucicault's scheme *did* work then.

KITTY

Not at *all*. At least not *her way*. That's what I'll tell you about. It's unbelievably funny.

TOWNLEY (*coldly*)

I *see*.

KITTY

Oh *do* you! You don't in the least. This seems to be rather too staggering for you. Don't be melodramatic I beg. If you want me to dine with you ring me up. If you don't—*don't*. Good night.

TOWNLEY

At three—sharp. Good night. Good night, Brown.
[BOB *doesn't speak*.]

KITTY (*putting her hand out impulsively to TOWNLEY*)

You're a darling.

[TOWNLEY *takes KITTY's hand for an instant—and goes down the steps*.]

BOB

What does it all mean?

KITTY

All what? Townley on my balcony? That ought not to need an interpretation—for you.

BOB

What?

KITTY

Yes. Good night.

[*She starts to go.*]

BOB

Is it—what it looks like?

KITTY

Nothing very novel about it—is there?

BOB

What was he doing in your room?

KITTY

That's a very naive question—for *you*. How silly it all is. I'm going to bed. Good night.

BOB

Kitty!

KITTY

Yes?

BOB

It's horrible! I can't *believe* it. It isn't *you*.

KITTY

I don't think you know much about what is—or *isn't*—me.

BOB

I *do*. You can't have changed like this. It simply *is not possible*.

KITTY

Why not?

BOB

Are you doing this sort of thing all the time? God—what are you laughing at?

KITTY

It's so funny!

BOB

No it isn't! I want you to know I've absolutely done nothing wrong towards Dierdre Lessing. I'm horribly sorry and ashamed about the whole thing downstairs—and you've got to tell me exactly what *you* mean by this. In the name of heaven, why did you let that man come up here? Is he—

[BOB stops suddenly as DIERDRE comes onto the balcony from his room. She is wearing the same gown as in Scene I. She stops as she sees KITTY and BOB—looking from one to the other with quick suspicion.]

KITTY

Hello. Come out. Don't look so suspicious. It's quite all right—I assure you. I've been sitting on the steps with a man—and Mr. Brown was inconsiderate enough to come out at the wrong moment.

DIERDRE (*trying to be at ease—but very doubtful*)

Oh—

KITTY

The man was Townley—if it interests you to know.

DIERDRE

Oh I say, Bob— It's a wonder you wouldn't stay inside.

KITTY

That's what *I'm* going to do. *I'm* going in and stay in.

DIERDRE

Don't go on my account.

KITTY

Sweet of you—but I've got to pack and I'm awfully sleepy.

DIERDRE

Wait a minute—please, Kitty. I know everything I said downstairs—and I *meant* it—only I didn't mean to *say* it. You were terribly nice. Thanks a lot. I came in to talk to Bob about it and since I *am* here—there's no use pretending I'm not. So that's that.

BOB

You came to say you were sorry.

DIERDRE

Oh no I didn't.

BOB

We understand—but it wasn't a very wise thing for you to do, Dierdre. A—Mrs.—Mrs. Brown will go back with you.

DIERDRE

What?

KITTY

You mean chaperone her back to her room—in case somebody else might be strolling about?

BOB

Yes—that's *just exactly* what I mean.

DIERDRE

Don't you love it?

[DIERDRE *and* KITTY *laugh.*]

BOB

Listen, Dierdre. You can't stay here.

DIERDRE

I want to ask Kitty something. She can help me.

[DIERDRE *goes closer to* KITTY. BOB *moves to the right corner of the balcony—his back turned to the others.*]

KITTY

I'm not so sure of that. I don't know that I'd have chosen myself to come to for help—*just now*.

DIERDRE

I've thought till I'm woozy—but I don't *get* anywhere. What shall I do? I've promised to marry Bruce but I'm crazy about Bob.

BOB

Dierdre—*stop* this.

DIERDRE

She *knows*. I spilled it all down stairs anyway. What would you do—Kitty—if you were in my place?

KITTY

If I were in your place—I'm sure I would marry Bob. (BOB *turns to watch* KITTY.) I'd believe that he was the one man for me—and that I'd be the *one woman* for him—*always*. I'd believe that *nothing* could ever change him. That's the way I know I'd feel about Bob—but I suppose you're much too intelligent for that.

BOB (*forgetting* DIERDRE *entirely and going to* KITTY)

Are you still laughing?

KITTY

Do I sound too old fashioned and sentimental to be true?

BOB

Not if you mean it.

DIERDRE

Look at *me*, Bob. *I* mean it.

KITTY (*to* BOB)

Then why don't you two try it? You must know pretty well what you want by this time.

BOB (*looking steadily at* KITTY)

I do know just exactly what I want. I was never so sure as I am this minute.

KITTY

You may be two of the lucky ones who *do* find the most wonderful thing in the world.

DIERDRE (*drawing* BOB *away from* KITTY)

Couldn't we make it that—Bob? I know now—I could.

BOB

Dierdre, you don't know what you're doing. You're only a child.

DIERDRE

I'm not. I love you, Bob. I love you.

BOB

I blame myself terribly, Dierdre—but it's better for you to know the truth now. I—I didn't think for a minute it was—like this—with you.

DIERDRE

Don't you want to marry me?

BOB

Dierdre—dear girl—it wasn't that way at all.

DIERDRE

That's a damned lie. You were just as keen as I was—for *anything*. What's changed you? Oh—What were you and she doing here—alone—together?

BOB

What?

DIERDRE (*to KITTY*)

Did you take him away from me?

KITTY

Did I *what*?

BOB

For God's sake tell her the truth, Kitty—or I will.

DIERDRE

You needn't, I *know*. You *did* what Gran wanted.

BOB

You can't believe any such rot.

DIERDRE

Why wouldn't I believe it? Before she came you were crazy about me. Now you're not.

BOB

Dierdre—Kitty and I are—

KITTY (*stopping BOB with her hand*)

Don't, Bob—let it alone—it's better this way. (*To DIERDRE.*) Since I—since *anything could* take him away from you—aren't you glad to know it now—before you—married him?

DIERDRE

Oh—you did—you *did!*

BOB

Kitty—

KITTY

Don't, Bob. (*To DIERDRE.*) Now you—*know.*

DIERDRE

It's vile—it's beastly! Right here in grandmother's house!

KITTY

And what are *you* doing here—right in your grandmother's house? I suppose you thought you were very *brave* to come—to take life in your own hands and look it straight in the face. Well—here we are. If you want to find things out for yourself you'll

have to accept things *as they are*. You've found *this before* you married him—instead of afterwards. I think you're rather to be congratulated.

DIERDRE (*with a half sob*)

Oh—

BOB

Dierdre, you can't stay here. Go to bed and get some sleep and tomorrow we'll talk this all out clearly and honestly.

DIERDRE

I wouldn't believe anything you said to me. I wouldn't believe *anything*—ever again. Everything in the world is horrible—horrible—
[*She goes out the way she came.*]

KITTY (*after a pause*)

I seem to have heard that before. Well, it turned out beautifully—just exactly as Bouci wanted it.

BOB

I don't care what the old woman wants. I'm not going to have her think this rot about you. I'm going to clear it all up the first thing in the morning.

KITTY

If you do you'll spoil it. This is the best thing that could possibly happen to Dierdre.

BOB

At your expense.

KITTY

Well, why not be the goat in a good cause once in a lifetime?

BOB

But I'm thinking of *you*.

KITTY

And I'm thinking of her. The whole world will never be so completely smashed for her again. It doesn't happen twice. And since you seem to be tired and through, it's an easy way out for you—and I think I've got rather a kick out of it myself. So let's call it a day.

BOB

Kitty—how much did you mean of what you said about love?

KITTY

Now, really, Bob. I was trying to say the right things to a very young girl, very much in love with you. It was working well, when all of a sudden she believed this pleasant little thing she thought she saw right before her eyes. Very easy for her to believe. A très sophisticated young person she is.

BOB

Stop talking about her. Kitty, I'm more in love with you than I ever was in my life.

KITTY

Oh—Mr. Brown, this is so sudden.

BOB

I adore you.

KITTY

It's the moon.

BOB (*taking her by the shoulders and turning her towards him*)

Stop this. Look at me. Talk to me like—like—

KITTY

Like what?

BOB

Like your own honest to God self. You haven't said a real thing to me since you came.

KITTY (*getting away from him*)

I don't know any real things—do you?

BOB

Stop bluffing and hedging. I love you. Doesn't that mean anything to you at all?

KITTY

Yes—that I'm something new to you.

BOB

How much does this Townley thing mean?

KITTY

Nothing in particular. Only that you're not used to seeing other men aware of me.

BOB

I'm not used to seeing other men treating you as though they had a right to—to—

KITTY

To what?

BOB

To come up here.

KITTY

Townley had a perfect right to come up here. I invited him.

BOB

God, Kitty, I can't stand this. What does it mean?

KITTY

It means I like him.

BOB

And what else?

KITTY

I don't know what else—yet.

BOB

How far has it gone?

KITTY

Just as far as—as—

BOB

As—what?

KITTY

As the door.

BOB

Are you in love with him?

KITTY

I always like to think I'm in love with somebody.

BOB

Is there nothing left of what you used to feel for me?
Is every bit of it gone?

KITTY

Every little bit.

BOB

Is it?

KITTY

Do you think I'm a fool? I've filled my life with other things.

BOB

What things?

KITTY

Things—*things*—to take the place of the ones I used to think were everything and found were *nothing*.

BOB

What about you—yourself? What's become of that?

KITTY

I find myself a much easier person to live with than I used to be. I don't take myself as seriously as I used to.

BOB

Oh, Kitty, you were the sweetest thing in the world, and you still are.

KITTY

Was I? I don't remember.

BOB

I don't believe you've changed. You're the same adorable thing I loved, and you're even more so now. Kitty, I—I—

KITTY

No—no—Bob.

BOB (*drawing her close in his arms*)

Please—please—darling.

KITTY

Oh, no—Bob, not that.

BOB

I can't help it, Kitty. Why can't I have you again?
[*He kisses her.*]

KITTY

It's over—it's finished.
[*Getting away from him.*]

BOB (*after a pause in a low, hard tone*)

Is there anybody else?

KITTY

Yes. Why not?

BOB

Is this the way you've been living? Have there been other men? Have you—have you—

KITTY

And if I have, what of it?
[*She stops as a soft whistle is heard from below.*]

WALLACE (*not seen in the darkness*)

—Kitty, are you there?

KITTY (*to BOB*)

Well—we're both having a busy evening—aren't we? It's Wally. Hello, lovely night, isn't it?

[*Looking over the railing.*]

WALLACE

I want to say the poem to you.

KITTY

I'm dying to hear it—but you can't now. Somebody else is here.

WALLACE

Oh.

KITTY

Sorry. Ring me up at three o'clock tomorrow—sharp.

WALLACE

At three sharp.

KITTY

Perhaps I'll have dinner with you tomorrow night.

WALLACE

Thanks.

KITTY

Good night.

WALLACE (*softly*)

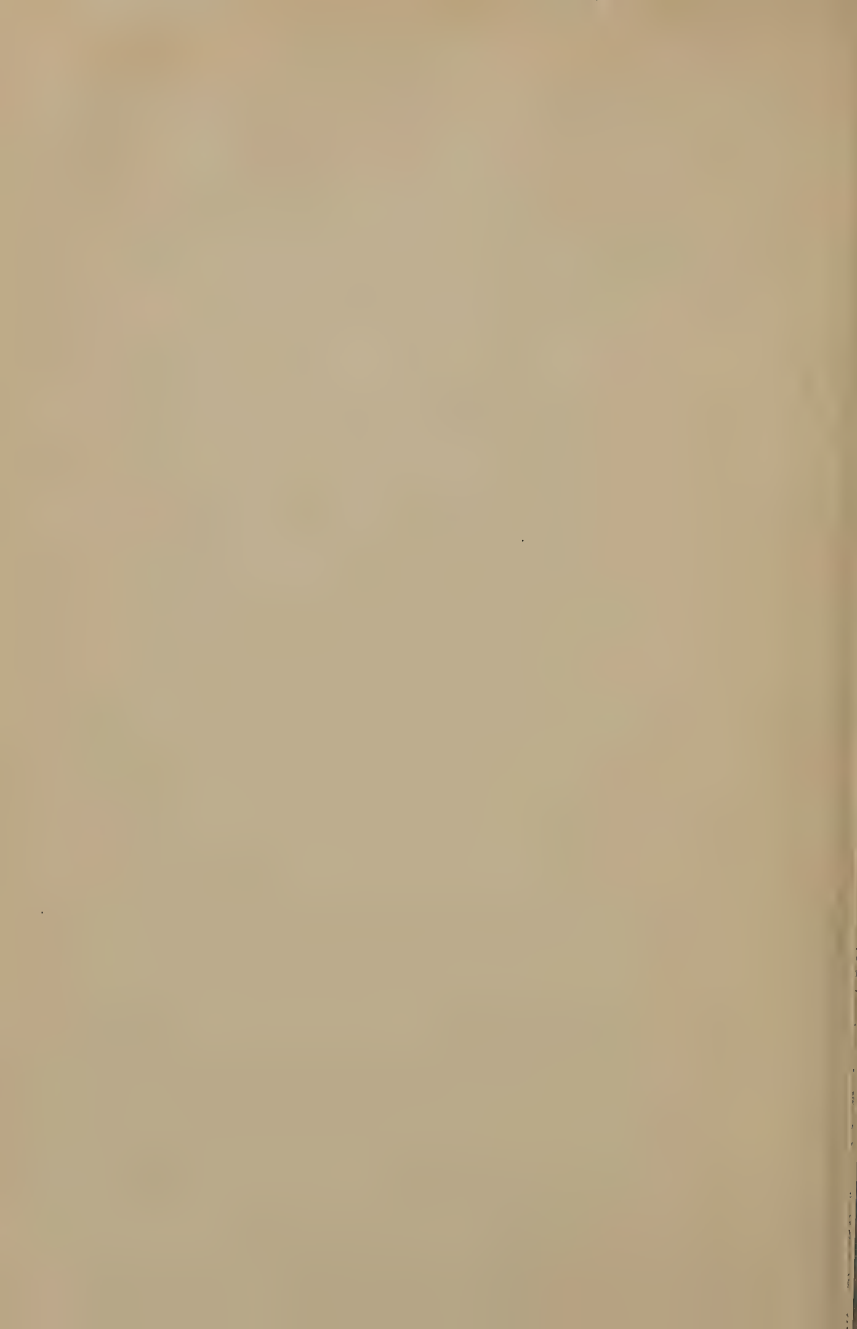
Good night.

KITTY (*after a slight pause*)

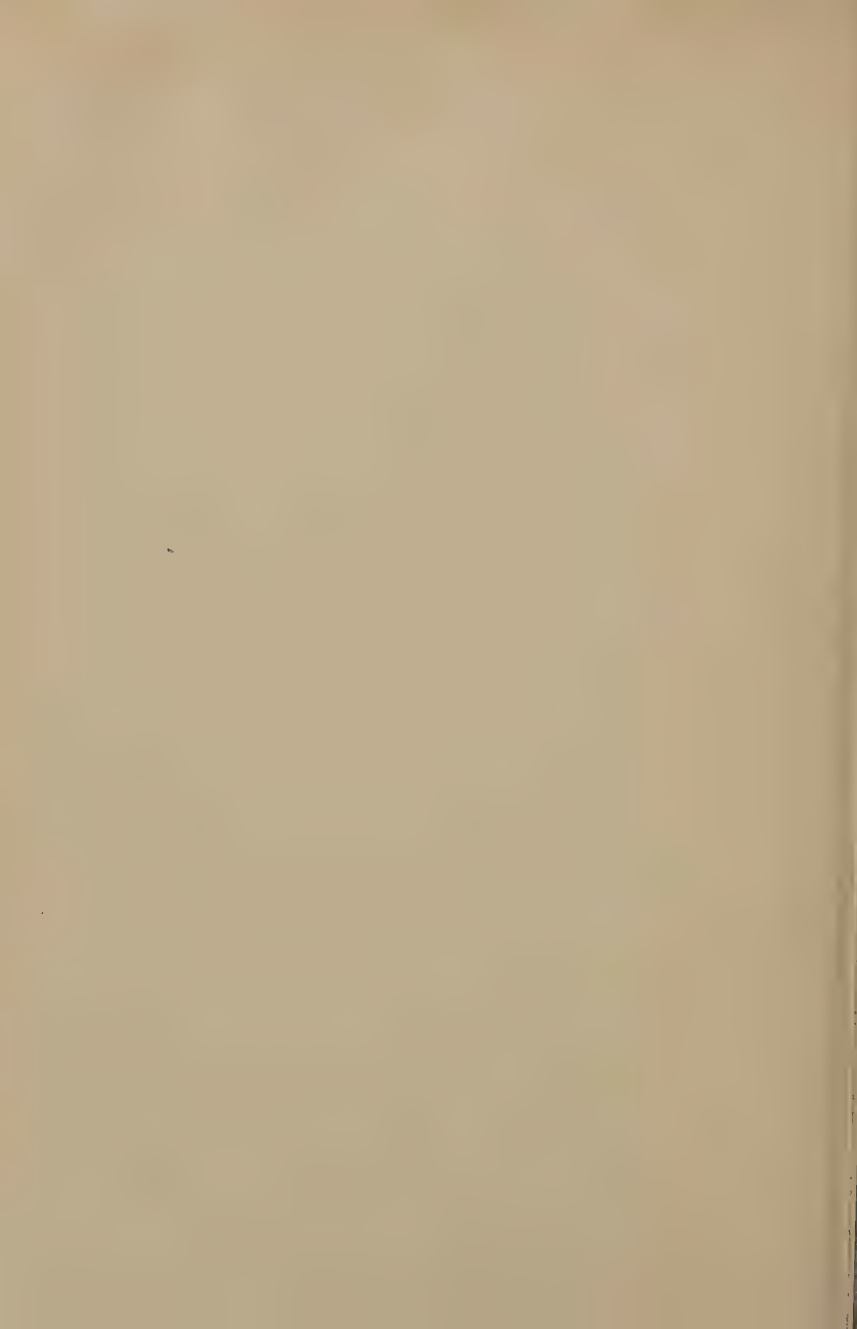
Well—I don't expect anybody else—but perhaps you *do*—Mr. Brown. Good night.

[*She goes in as the*

CURTAIN FALLS



ACT THREE



ACT THREE

Time: 9 o'clock the following morning.

Place: The same as Act I.

At Curtain: DIERDRE comes out quickly from the hall—dressed for going away.

BRUCE (*coming after her*)

If you're going in I'm going with you.

DIERDRE

No you're not. I may not go to town. I'm just waiting to hop in the car and drive till I get ready to stop.

BRUCE

But you—

DIERDRE

Don't, Bruce—*please*. I want to be alone for awhile.

BRUCE

Then let me take you some place and you can stay if you want to.

DIERDRE

No! I'm getting away from everybody.

BRUCE (*after a pause*)

You needn't be so cut up *as all that*—about last night.

DIERDRE

Because I got plastered and made a fool of myself?
Believe me I'm not. I don't give a damn about that.

BRUCE

Then what *is* it?

DIERDRE

Oh, let me alone, boy—my nerves are jumpy.

BRUCE

Sorry.

DIERDRE

I mean—I want to get off by myself and *think*—
before I *do* talk to you. I'm fed up with these people.

BRUCE

But they're all leaving this morning—every one of
'em—and we'd be alone.

DIERDRE

I want to get away from *you*! Can't you get that?

BRUCE (*after a pause*)

Are you going to meet Bob some place?

DIERDRE

None of your business.

BRUCE

You *have* made a fool of yourself. For God's sake
let him alone—Dierdre. He's *through*.

DIERDRE (*with sudden anger and abandon*)

And why is he? Because Gran crashed in. Because

she got that Kitty woman to come here and vamp him.

BRUCE

Oh bosh!

DIERDRE (*going to sit on the sofa at Left*)

Of course she got him. I couldn't compete with *her*.

BRUCE

He cooled off himself.

DIERDRE

He *didn't*.

BRUCE

Why she never even looked at him.

DIERDRE

Not so anybody could *see* it. It was all on the side—on the sly.

BRUCE

How do you know?

DIERDRE

Because I *do*.

BRUCE

That's a pretty low down thing to say about her.

DIERDRE

I *found* them—last night—on his balcony—chummy enough. They've been right there together all the time.

BRUCE

You found them? *How?*

DIERDRE

I went to Bob's room—to talk to him.

BRUCE

You didn't. You didn't do a damn fool thing like that.

DIERDRE

I put it up to her—and she acknowledged it.

BRUCE

For Heaven's sake why did you go into his room?

DIERDRE

Because I *wanted* to.

BRUCE

Then thank God she *was* there. Thank God you know now about Brown. Oh, Dierdre—how *could* you?

DIERDRE

If he came down here right now and asked me to go away with him—I'd go.

BRUCE

You wouldn't.

DIERDRE

I would.

BRUCE

You're not in love with him. It's just a—an—infatuation.

DIERDRE

Whatever it is I've *got* it.

BRUCE (*touching DIERDRE's shoulder and sitting on the seat at Left of the sofa*)

You'll get over it. I've been that way—lots of times.

DIERDRE

Of course you have. But I haven't. It *means* something to *me*.

BRUCE

Not a thing. Not a damn thing. If you threw yourself away on that man you'd want to kill yourself afterwards.

DIERDRE

Applesauce!

BRUCE (*leaning towards her over the back of the sofa*)

Dierdre—dearest—I want to see you through this. Believe me there's nothing in it but what you'll be terribly sorry for—and ashamed of afterwards.

DIERDRE

Awfully wise—aren't you?

BRUCE

You bet I'm wise. I want to marry you. I love you. I want to make it the—the greatest ever—and we could, too—if you'd—

DIERDRE

Yes—*why* do you want to marry me? *Why* do you love me? (*Breaking a little.*) I think it's perfectly

marvellous that you do, Bruce—but why?—It's because you've lived enough to be sure. Well, I haven't.

BRUCE

You don't have to go through that.

DIERDRE (*softening and putting a hand over his*)

Listen, Bruce—I like you better than anybody in the world. Maybe we are the best bet for each other. But I'm not crazy about you the way I am about Bob.

BRUCE

Take it from me—liking is a better bet than craziness.

DIERDRE (*drawing her hand away*)

Now, don't talk to me like Santa Claus. I want to know what I'm doing because I know—*myself*. Not because somebody's telling me what I ought to do.

BRUCE

If you'd use your bean and tell yourself the truth you'd know what to do.

DIERDRE

I *am* using my bean. That's just it. I'm not swallowing any old stuff.

BRUCE

Now get this. There's no new slant on this old stuff at all. Either a girl's decent or she isn't. There's no half way business about it—and when a fellow gets down to brass tacks, he wants the girl he's going to marry—the one who is going to be the mother of his

kids—to be the straightest, finest, cleanest thing in the world.

DIERDRE

Pearls you learned at mother's knee. And if a girl wants the darling boy she marries to be the same thing—where the hell is she going to find him?

BRUCE

It's not the same thing at all for you and me.

DIERDRE

It is!

BRUCE

It isn't!

DIERDRE

It is—exactly the same thing. Why should I marry you and settle down and pretend that's all there is to it when I know damned well it isn't?

BRUCE

Because you can't do anything that—

DIERDRE

Why shouldn't I have Bob for a while and marry you, too?

BRUCE (*rising and walking away*)

Because you can't. You simply can't. That's all there is to it.

DIERDRE

Do you mean to tell me if I'd *had* an affair with

Bob—and it helped me to know I wanted to marry you—you wouldn't marry me?

BRUCE

Oh, Dierdre, I love you. I want to help you. There isn't anything I wouldn't do for you. Can't you see you're—

[MRS. BOUCICAULT *enters from the terrace—followed by PERKINS—who carries the morning mail in a small basket.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you two doing down here at this ungodly hour? How I loathe Monday mornings—coming down to speed the parting guest. I don't know why I do it. I don't know why I don't just let 'em go—unless it's because it gives me such intense pleasure to actually *see* them go. What's up? Where are *you* going, Dierdre?

DIERDRE (*rising and going towards the terrace*)

Away for a few days—by myself.

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*sitting on the sofa at Left*)

Get along, Perkins. (PERKINS *puts the basket of letters on table above sofa and goes out through the hall.*) That's a good idea. Go off and come to your senses—and then—

DIERDRE (*turning back to MRS. BOUCICAULT*)

It was a rotten low down thing for you to do, Gran.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you saying?

DIERDRE

You were terribly clever, weren't you? It worked all right. I found them last night. I went to Bob's room to talk to him—and there they were. It's lousy—that's what it is—filthy.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you—

DIERDRE

The sneakiness of it!

BRUCE (*who has gone to the end of the piano standing with his back to the others*)

Be careful, Dierdre! Don't talk so loud.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You went to Bob's room last night? You *didn't*. If you did you didn't know what you were doing. I won't *have* it.

DIERDRE

Won't you? How about the other lady—what *she's* done? That's all right, I s'pose. You can swallow what's going on in your house—so long as you get what you want.

BRUCE

Shut up—Dierdre!

MRS. BOUCICAULT

How *dare* you say such a thing to *me*!

DIERDRE

Oh, how dare—*bunk*, Gran! You sent for her, didn't you—to do *just that*?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Just what? Just what? Kitty's not that kind of a woman.

DIERDRE

You put them off there in that wing—alone—together—so this *would* happen—didn't you?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—no—*no!* I don't know what you're talking about. But whatever *has* happened, has opened your eyes—hasn't it? Aren't you through with Bob Brown now? Aren't you ready to behave yourself and marry Bruce?

DIERDRE

Do you think that has anything to do with *me*—and the way I feel toward Bob? Just because you cooked up a nasty thing with that kind of a woman—
[DIERDRE stops suddenly as KITTY comes out from the hall. KITTY is wearing a summer gown appropriate for going to town—but without hat or coat.]

KITTY (*coming further into the room*)

I suppose I'm the woman.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I know this is all ridiculous nonsense, Kitty. I don't believe a word of it.

KITTY

Why don't you? You wanted it to happen—didn't you? That's why you offered me your hospitality—
isn't it?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bruce—go away.

BRUCE

Why should I?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Because I *tell* you to.

KITTY

Is this going to be too bad for his young ears to hear?

DIERDRE

He knows the whole business.

BRUCE

I think I have a right to know anything that concerns Dierdre.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No you haven't. Go away, I tell you.

BRUCE

Do you want me to, Dierdre?

DIERDRE

Yes.

[BRUCE *hesitates and goes out across the terrace and to the Left.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Kitty—tell Dierdre that what she thinks—*isn't true.*

KITTY

She must tell me what she *does* think—before I can do that.

DIERDRE (*fighting back her angry tears*)

You took him away from me—didn't you?

KITTY

I can't say I tried to.

DIERDRE

You didn't even *have* to try—I s'pose—with your methods.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Dierdre—

KITTY

And what are my methods supposed to be? Oh, let's be quite frank—please. Just exactly what is it you think I've done?

DIERDRE

Something too rotten to say.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

The child is *insane* with jealousy, Kitty. Tell her that what she thinks—is—is—is *impossible*.

KITTY

Did *you* think it would be so impossible, Bouci? Would you have cared so much *how* I arrived at what you wanted—just so I *did* arrive?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'm shocked beyond words, Kitty, that *you* could think that *I* could want—

DIERDRE (*going back of the large chair at Right*)

Don't take me for a blithering idiot, Gran. I *know*.

KITTY (*with sudden anger—moving a little towards DIERDRE*)

And *what* do you know? There was just a minute last night when I *wanted* you to believe I'd done that rotten thing—because I thought it would save you a *bigger* heartache—later on. More or less the same thing happened to me—once—and I was sorry for you—with all my heart. I intended to hold my tongue—and go through with it. But since *you've* talked—in not quite a good sportsman way—we'll talk a little *more*. You came to the gentleman's—balcony—and found me there first. Surely you can allow me the same comfortable freedom—without question—which I grant you. Besides—I wasn't alone with him—remember. Mr. Townley was there too.

DIERDRE

You don't think I'm sap enough to believe *that*—do you?

KITTY

Here's Townie himself. Ask him.

[*As TOWNLEY comes out of the house—ready to leave.*]

DIERDRE

Were you there?

TOWNLEY

Are you speaking to me?

KITTY (*laughing at TOWNLEY's confusion*)

She means were you on my balcony last night—or were you not?

TOWNLEY (*trying to keep his equilibrium*)

Well—a—a—was I?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you splashing round about—for—Townley? Can't you say a little something?

KITTY

I hope you don't mind being compromised a bit for my sake, Townie.

DIERDRE (*as WALLACE comes out from the house—dressed for going in town*)

Here's another one of your admirers. I suppose you'll tell us *he* was there too.

KITTY (*laughing at WALLACE*)

Almost—not quite.

WALLACE

I beg pardon?

KITTY

We're discussing the balcony scene.

DIERDRE

We *all* seem to have been there—some time—during the night. I suppose *you* were among the number.
[WALLACE *looks astounded, tries to speak and flounders. TOWNLEY laughs.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT

What are you laughing at, Townley?

TOWNLEY

I'm not quite sure.

KITTY

Don't *you* think it's funny, Wallie?

WALLACE

A—I don't seem to know what it's all about.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

No—I dare say.

KITTY

What's the matter with *you*, Bouci? You have a *very* peculiar tone in your voice. Don't tell me you aren't *pleased* with me.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'm not sure what I've got to be pleased *about*. I'd like to enjoy the joke if there is one. Just where do these two come in?

KITTY

They didn't come in. They came *up*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Up *what*?

KITTY

My steps. You don't mind a man or two sitting on my steps, do you? Why did you put me there—if you do?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Are you pulling my leg?

KITTY

God forbid! It was this way—Bouci. After Townley and Mr. Brown—and—*Dierdre*—and I had all

—*happened* upon my balcony—and chatted a little—all more or less on the same subject—I was about to say good night—when I heard a soft whistle and there was Wallie at the foot of the steps—in the moonlight—asking if he couldn't come up and recite his poem to me.

[KITTY and TOWNLEY *laugh.*]

WALLACE

Well—I was—just passing by and—I—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Yes—there must be a *little* something in it, Wallace.
You look like a sick cat.

BOB (*coming out from the house—also dressed for going to town*)

Good morning— What's the joke?

KITTY (*hardening quickly*)

The joke's on me—Mr. Brown.

BOB

Yes? Why?

KITTY

It seems to have been necessary to *check up* the incidents of last night.

DIERDRE

But she's left *you* out. How about the you and Kitty incident?

BOB

We—

KITTY

No—

DIERDRE

Go on. She's so keen about telling *everything*— Go through with it.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Dierdre—

BOB

I won't let them think—

KITTY

I don't care what they think. I have your word.

BOB

I don't care a hang about my word.

KITTY

I won't have my personal affairs aired like this.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

She's quite right. I don't like it either.

DIERDRE

No, but you've let her make a fool of me. You've let her make a joke of the whole rotten thing.

KITTY

And what are *you* trying to make out of it? I know I asked you to believe that inconceivably vile thing—and now I ask you *not* to. That's where the joke comes in. I'm afraid I've tried to be a little *too* clever, Bouci. I'm afraid I've got myself in too deep. There doesn't seem to be anything about me to tell

—what I am— (*her voice breaks*) or how things are. That's rather a joke too. I know exactly what *each* and every one of you is thinking about me—each in his own way. (*To DIERDRE.*) If *you* think I took your Mr. Brown away from you last night—allow me to give him back to you this morning.

DIERDRE

I don't *believe* you.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Dierdre!

BOB (*stopping KITTY as she starts to go*)

Dierdre—listen—Kitty is my wife—or *was*. (*There is a murmur of amazement from them all.*) She divorced me three years ago. But she still is my wife—to *me*. There never has been and there never will be anyone to take her place. The greatest thing that could happen to me would be for her to take me back—but that—I know—is a lost hope.

KITTY

You always *have* had good manners, Bob. He's only being magnificent, Bouci. This accidental meeting doesn't change anything for *us*. That was settled three years ago. Don't let it change anything for *anybody* else.

[*She goes out through the hall.*]

BOB (*after a pause*)

Dierdre—I'm sorry I—

DIERDRE (*in a low tone*)

Don't—please.

[*She goes out across the terrace and off at Right.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*rising, after a pause and going up Center*)

Well—I can't think of anything worth saying at the moment, except that you may miss your train, gentlemen. (WHITMAN *enters from the terrace.*) Here's Whitman to remind you of that. He's even better than I am at shuffling people off.

WHITMAN

The motor is—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Quite so, Whitman. They're coming.

[WHITMAN *goes out.*]

BOB

Well—good-by, Bouci.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You're not going.

BOB

But I must—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

You've got to wait. I want to talk to you. You can't throw a bomb like this and walk right off. I've got *some* curiosity—you know. Good-by, Townley.

[BOB *goes onto the terrace at Left.*]

TOWNLEY (*shaking hands*)

Thanks so much, Bouci— It was—

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I know—I know. Put it all in your letter. (*She waves TOWNLEY aside and puts out her hand to WALLACE—going onto the terrace.*) Come along, Wallace.

TOWNLEY (*going to KITTY as she comes back from the hall, wearing her hat and carrying her coat and gloves*)

It's been marvellous to know you. At least I haven't missed that.

KITTY

Why so final? What about that dinner tonight?

TOWNLEY (*in low tones—his back to the others on the terrace*)

Oh—is there any hope?

KITTY

Hope? Why not conviction? Everything's just the same as it was when I saw you last. Isn't it?

TOWNLEY

Will you come?

KITTY

You're going to phone me at three.

TOWNLEY

Oh—am I?

KITTY

Don't you want to?

TOWNLEY

More than anything on earth.

KITTY

Then for goodness sake *do it*. Bye-bye till three.

TOWNLEY

Until three.

[TOWNLEY *goes out on the terrace.*]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*to WALLACE, who has been talking to her on the terrace*)

Madge is going to stay all week. Run up again if you can.

WALLACE

Thanks, I'd love to.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Bob—you've got a car of your own here—haven't you?

BOB

Yes—why?

MRS. BOUCICAULT

I'll tell you later.

WALLACE (*coming down to KITTY who has crossed to look at her hat in the mirror which is on the piano*)

You've done something awfully sporting I'm sure—though I don't know just what.

KITTY

I haven't done *anything*. Things just *happen* to us. Heaven knows this is the last thing on the calendar I would have brought about.

WALLACE

Something has happened to *me*—too.

KITTY

What?

WALLACE

You. Am I never going to see you again?

KITTY

Why so doubtful?

WALLACE

Because I want it so much.

KITTY

At three.

[He kisses her hand.]

MADGE (*coming out of the house in a delectable morning outfit in time to see the kiss*)

Good morning—everybody.

[WALLACE drops KITTY's hand and moves away.]

KITTY (*going to sit on the sofa*)

Good morning.

MADGE (*going to WALLACE*)

You'll have to come back this evening.

WALLACE

Eh?

MADGE

I have a headache. You'll have to bring my powders to me.

WALLACE

Oh, I'm so sorry.

[He lets MADGE pass him, then holds up three fingers]

to KITTY. *She smiles and nods and holds up three fingers.* WALLACE *goes out after* MADGE.]

MRS. BOUCICAULT (*coming down into the room*)

You're a devil, Kitty. You might have let that poor thing alone.

BOB (*following* MRS. BOUCICAULT)

I have my car here. I'll drive you in.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

That's *my* idea.

KITTY

Not *mine*.

MRS. BOUCICAULT

Well, I'd rather hear what you two people have to say to each other now—than anything going. But I'll clear out. Don't be a mule, Kitty. My advice is—take him again. If you don't—you'll be sorry all your life. If you do—you'll be still *more* sorry—so you have my blessing either way.

[*She goes out through the hall.*]

KITTY

Well—good-by, Bob. I'm sorry I messed up your week end. I seem to be always spoiling your love affairs.

[*She goes to him—with her hand out.*]

BOB (*putting both hands behind him*)

Kitty, I haven't slept a wink. Those men—last night. You've got to tell me the truth in plain English.

KITTY

Are you going to begin that again?

[She goes to adjust her hat at the mirror which is on the piano.]

BOB

You can't keep the children, Kitty.

KITTY (*turning to BOB with sudden fear*)

You gave them up. You can't take them away from me.

BOB

I gave them up because you had the things that made it right for them to be with you.

KITTY (*going towards BOB*)

The things that bored you stiff.

BOB

The things that are right. Why have you changed like this?

KITTY

Why have I changed? Oh, God—you don't know yet—you don't know *now* what you did to me—what you took away from me.

BOB

And you took just as much away from me.

KITTY

Well, then this is what we've done to each other.

BOB

Yes, this is what we've done to each other—over

something that didn't amount to a hill of beans. Surely you know that now, Kitty.

KITTY

It wasn't even a hill of beans to you—but it took away everything from me—everything. See here, Bob—why are we digging this up? It's the last thing on earth I wanted to do. I've spent three years trying to forget it. Let's stop and say good-by as sensibly as possible.

BOB

It's not so easy for me as it evidently is for you. Three years haven't made me forget. I've been foot-loose and home sick and done for. If you'd forgiven me that one time we'd still be together.

KITTY

And I'd still be forgiving you.

BOB

I'm not so sure of that.

KITTY

Do you pretend for a minute that that one crash would have pulled you up forever—changed you entirely for the rest of your life?

BOB

I could change now.

KITTY (*sitting in the large chair at Right*)

It looks like it. If I hadn't accidentally happened to be here—how far would it have gone with Dierdre?

BOB

Just exactly as far as she wanted it to. I told you last night I've amused myself with anything and everything that came my way—since I lost you. How about this Townley? How far would that have gone if I hadn't been there?

KITTY

Don't you suppose I knew you were there? Don't you suppose I hoped you would find me with him? Don't you suppose seeing you carrying on with a girl again brought it all back so I couldn't stand it—so I wanted to hurt you as hard as I possibly—
[*Her voice breaks.*]

BOB (*drawing a chair close to her and sitting*)

Oh—that was it. Then there's nothing in it. There haven't been other men—since you left me?

KITTY (*after a pause—in a low firm tone*)

Yes.

BOB

Kitty!

KITTY

What did you expect?

BOB

I don't believe it.

KITTY (*rising and going behind the chair*)

Then why did you ask me?

BOB

How could you! How could you!

KITTY (*with sudden full abandon*)

Because I loved you so.

BOB

What?

KITTY (*moving up and to Center—letting her feeling carry her away at last*)

Heaven and earth and *God* were all mixed up in *you*. When that was gone *nothing* was left. Can't you understand that? I suppose you think I ought to have stayed at home with a broken heart, for the rest of my life—hugging my ideals. But I didn't seem to be able to do that. I had to get out and find out what it was all about—to see why *you* did it.

BOB

Well, then if you've found out so much—if you've got so wise and experienced—you know now how little that affair meant to me.

KITTY

Yes, I know now. I know both sides. I wanted to find out whether I'd been a fool or not—whether I had exaggerated what you did. Well, I hadn't. It was just as horrible as I thought it was. Bob, marriage means just one thing—complete and absolute fidelity or it's the biggest farce on *earth*.

BOB

I could make our marriage now what you thought it ought to be then.

KITTY (*sitting on the sofa at Left*)

That I should live to hear you say that, Mr. Brown!

BOB (*standing in front of her*)

How can you be so hard?

KITTY

Because I refuse to be made unhappy again.

BOB (*sitting above her on the sofa*)

Kitty, darling—if you'd let me begin again! God—what we've lost! Two people who loved each other as we did!

KITTY

Don't harp on *that*.

BOB

We had the great chance and muffed it.

KITTY

The chance is gone now, Bob. Let's be sane and look this in the face. What if we *did* go back—what of it? What is there *in* it?

BOB

Well, not so much if we're only thinking of ourselves. The thing that's been hitting me in the eye in the last three days is that there *is* something a damned sight bigger in it than ourselves—and that's what we ought to grab now—and hang on to.

KITTY

The *real* thing, yes. But as it *is*—as we've all *made* it.

BOB

Well, it *is* the real thing—to plenty of people.

KITTY

To whom, for instance? Anybody you know?

BOB

Yes, of course.

KITTY

Who are they?

BOB

Well—a—a—

KITTY

Exactly. Now let's get over this and not be sorry it happened. And the next time we see each other we'll be more game about it.

BOB

All right. Then we're going to be friends. Have dinner with me tonight in town.

KITTY

I have to eat *two* dinners *now*.

BOB

Eat three. I'll make it any time you say.

KITTY

Why not all dine together?

BOB

Cut out Townley.

KITTY

But not Wallie. You don't mind Wallie. He's having the time of his life.

[*They laugh together. BOB bends over her and kisses her hair.*]

BOB

Give me a chance to make you love me again. That's fair, isn't it?

KITTY

Love isn't enough, Bob.

BOB

The children.

KITTY

We *had* the children. We had love—but that didn't keep us together. No, Bob, I'm not going to give you a chance to hurt me again. *It's the awfulest hurt in the world* and it would still be there, if I'd let it.

[*She rises and moves away from him.*]

BOB (*following her a little*)

But I *wouldn't* hurt you again.

KITTY

No, Bob—I'm not going back. I'm going *on*. I don't know to just *what*—but *on*. For heaven's sake let's be gay about it.

BOB

To see you like this is a worse tragedy than losing you. Aren't you sick of this damned batting around—trying to fool yourself into thinking you're having a good time?

KITTY

Maybe you've had enough—you've been at it longer

than I have—maybe you're ready for your slippers at the fire—I'm not.

[*Putting on her coat.*]

BOB

Oh, Kitty, marry me again.

KITTY

You're out of your senses.

BOB

It's what I want. It's the only thing I do want—you and the children. Can't we make a fresh start?

KITTY

It's too late.

BOB

Do you hate me?

KITTY (*putting on her gloves*)

No.

BOB

Then why—

KITTY

Oh, it isn't you.

BOB

What is it then?

KITTY

It's myself. I couldn't. Neither could you, Bob. You're just making a gallant gesture.

BOB

No. From the minute I saw you, something pounded

in me so hard—an idiotic hope—a something bigger than I ever had—or ever knew there could be. This is tougher than the first time I lost you. Good-by, Kitty.

[Putting out his hand.]

KITTY (*taking his hand after an instant's hesitation*)

Good-by—and good luck. You'll get over this, Bob, in no time at all.

BOB

Oh—

KITTY

Yes, you will. I know. It doesn't take long.

BOB

Well, how is it going to end? What will you do? Where are you going?

KITTY

I don't know, I'm sure. Life's a very complicated business, isn't it?

BOB

Do you think I could make you love me again? That's the point.

KITTY

That's what I'm afraid of. That's why I'm running now.

BOB (*going to her*)

Kitty—

KITTY

If I let myself go, I could be fascinated by you again in no time at all.

BOB

You're adorable!

KITTY (*holding him off*)

No, Bob, let's not make fools of ourselves. It would be no joke for either one of us to try to settle down again.

BOB

But we—

KITTY

No, I'm afraid, Bob. I'm honestly *afraid*.
[*Sitting in the large chair at Right.*]

BOB

Why? Why, dearest?

KITTY

I don't know. I've been so gay—so—so full of—so *empty*.

BOB (*dropping on his knees in front of her*)

Kitty!

KITTY

So lonely—

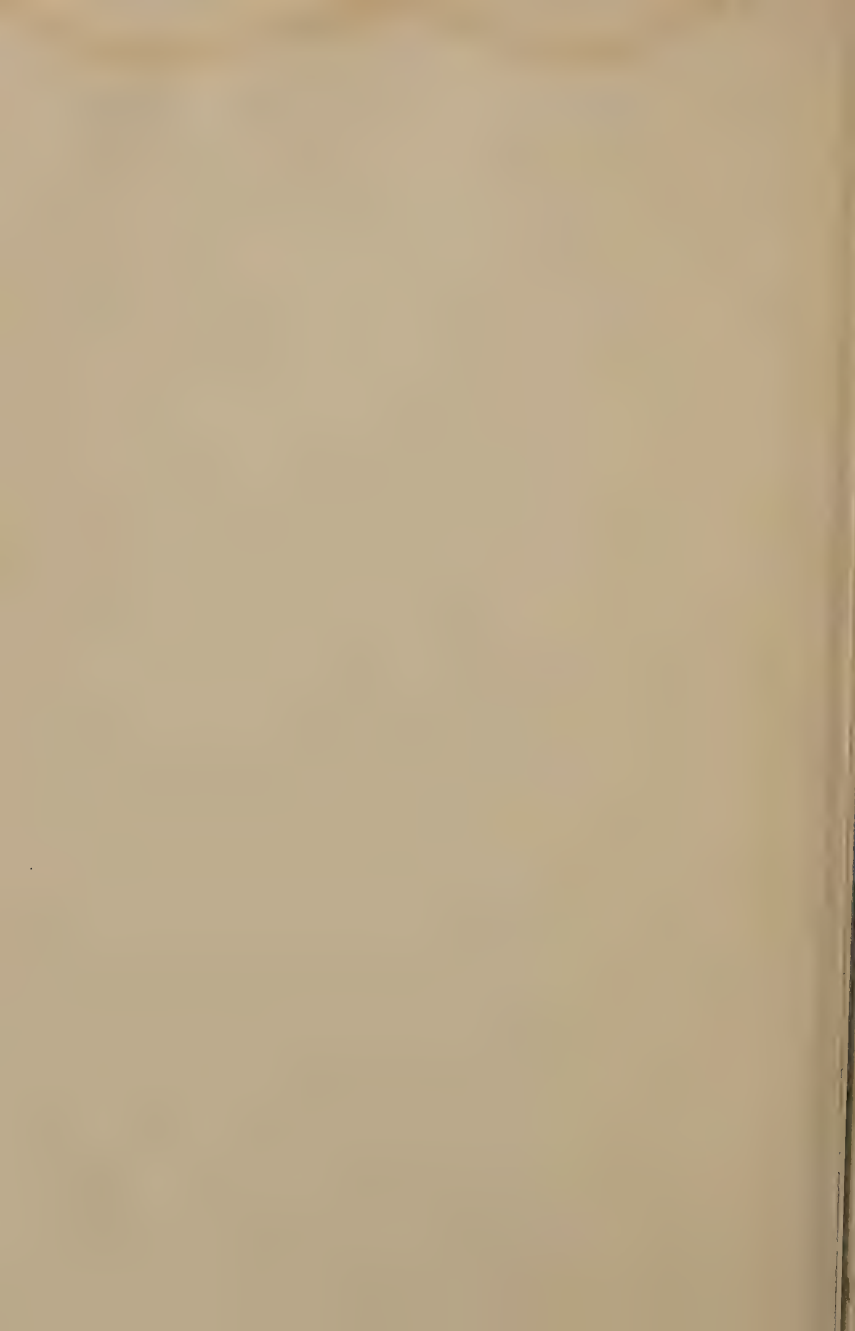
BOB

Darling!

KITTY

Oh, Bob, I love you so. (*Putting her arms about his neck.*) Take me back.

THE CURTAIN FALLS



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